Fall of the Mughal Empire

SIR JADUNATH SARKAR, Kt., C.I.E.,

Honorary Member, Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain.

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FOREWORD

The birth of the New India in which we live was preceded by the death of a political and social order under which the millions of this country had been nurtured for two centuries and a half and which had done great things for them. The Mughal Empire, established in 1556, had united much of the Indian continent under one sceptre, given it a uniform civilisation whose conquering light had penetrated beyond the bounds of that empire, and on the whole promoted the general happiness of the people in a degree unapproached except in the mythical past. It broke the isolation of the provinces and the barrier between India and the outer world, and thus took the first step necessary for the modernisation of India and the growth of an Indian nationality in some distant future. The achievements of that empire under four great sovereigns have been the worthy themes of the historians of Akbar and Jahangir, Shah Jahan and Aurangzib. But the exhaustion of this civilising force with the consequent ruin of this country has hitherto repelled historians, probably because of the dismal nature of the subject which presents no spectacle calculated to elevate the human mind or warm the human bosom.

And yet our immediate historic past, while it resembles a tragedy in its course, is no less potent than a true tragedy to purge the soul by exciting pity and horror. Nor is it wanting in the deepest instruction for the present. The headlong decay of the age-old Muslim rule in India and the utter failure of the last Hindu attempt at empire-

building by the new-sprung Marathas, are intimately linked together, and must be studied with accuracy of detail as to facts and penetrating analysis as to causes if we wish to find out the true solutions of the problems of modern India and avoid the pitfalls of the past.

The light of our fathers' experience is indispensably necessary for guiding aright the steps of those who would rule the destinies of our people in the present. Happily, such light is available in unthought of profusion. The dissolution of the old order in India did not form a dark age, during which the activity of the human mind ceased or the human brain and the human hand left no memorial of their working. On the contrary, the Eighteenth Century in India is illumined for its historian by a host of witnesses of the most diverse races, creeds and tongues and recording events as looked at from all different points of view. We, no doubt, lack detailed official annals like those written for Akbar and his four immediate successors; but the Indian actors in the scenes and detached foreign observers alike have left a multitude of private memoirs and journals which are in some respects of even greater value than the former class of works though lacking in their minuteness of dates and names. For this century masses of manuscript news-letters have been preserved, giving us the current news in the freshest form. The records of the Maratha Government have at last been made available to students in their entirety. The State-papers of the English and the French have been printed in our own lifetime, and of the still unprinted material in these languages preserved in public libraries, most helpful lists have been published (notably Hills' *Home Miscellaneous* and the *Calendar of Persian Correspon-*

dence) The travel-books, diaries and memoirs of the early. Europeans in India form a vast literature, now mostly too rare to be obtained easily, but often giving priceless information on specific points and lighting up the economic and social condition of the age as no native work does.

The materials are vast and varied ; but this fact does not constitute the difficulty of the historian of the period so much as the immense number of the separate political bodies and centres of action created in the country by the dismemberment of an empire that had once embraced nearly the whole of India. A history of India in the 18th century which would attempt to deal with every one of these provinces or States in all its actions will be like a bag of loose stones constantly knocking against one another and not a single solid edifice.

The present writer is here making the first attempt to synthesise the Persian, Marathi, English, French, Hindi, Rajasthani and Sanskrit sources, and reconstruct the story of the fall of the Mughal Empire from the invasion of Nādir Shah in 1739 to the British conquest of Delhi and assumption of the keeper-ship of the puppet but still legitimate Padishah in 1803. But the nature of his subject has enforced a strict limitation on him. Dispersion of interest could be avoided only by keeping the eye constantly fixed on the centre of the empire,—the Emperor and his keepers,—and rigidly eliminating every side-issue that may divert the mind from the main theme. Thus, provinces that had cut themselves adrift from the empire, like Bengal and Bihar under the English from 1757, Malwa and Gujrat from 1741-50, the Panjab after 1757, Oudh after 1761,

and the six Deccan *subahs* after 1748,—will not have their events narrated here, except for the briefest references when needed to light up some problem or action of the central Government. The Anglo-French struggle for an Indian empire will be totally omitted. Rajputana and Bundelkhand, though now owing little more allegiance to Delhi than those lost provinces did, remained the cock-pit of Northern India, and the activities of those who held Delhi overflowed into these two regions almost to the end of the century. They will, therefore, be embraced in this survey. The internal affairs of the Maratha States are no concern of the historian of Delhi, except where they served as the motive force of some Maratha activity in Northern India, and to that extent alone will they be noticed.

It is hoped by these limitations to give unity of structure and connection of interest to this work Where so many centres have to be touched, a certain amount of repetition has been deliberately made, in order to refresh the distracted reader's memory, keep the main threads constantly before him, and clarify the issues.

In reviewing the earlier history of the decline of the same Empire as narrated in William Irvine's *Later Mughals,* edited and brought down to 1739 by me, Mr. P. E. Roberts used a very apt image when he wrote: "It drives a broad pathway through a very tangled jungle . . . . It is a piece of work which badly needed doing, and it has been done with amazing thoroughness . . . . The most valuable part of the book is the careful incorporation of Persian and Marathi unpublished material." The same woodcraft has been followed in

this continuation of that work, but the jungle is much thicker here. There was at least one common head of the Delhi Empire up to 1739 (when Irvine's book ends), one centre of Government in theory and almost always in practice. But after Nādir's invasion the dismemberment proceeded apace and many independent centres sprang up, whose interplay makes the history of the succeeding period extremely complicated. But the reader is most likely not to lose his way in this many-wooded forest if the historian is constantly by his side to whisper, "Delhi is not far off."

Such being the scope deliberately chosen for this work, the first volume has necessarily to treat its subject at a greater length than would be strictly proportionate to its time-extent. It takes up the narrative at the departure of Nādir Shah and ends with the fall of Ahmad Shah, (the last Emperor of Delhi who showed any independence and by the time of whose death all the great men of the former generation had disappeared.) The reign of his shadowy successor Alamgir II (1754—1759) and the rule of his wazir Ghaziuddin Imād-ul-mulk will receive a very brief treatment, because the historical stage of Delhi is now dominated by Ahmad Shah Abdali, whose career leading up to his crowning victory at Panipat (1761) deserves to be studied in greater detail from the wealth of original material not yet used by any writer. Then follows a period of dull chaotic ferment for some twelve years, with little to detain the historian long. A new scene opens with the rise of Mahadji Sindhia who bestrides the plains of Northern India like a Colossus for two decades. This heroic figure it is my intention to study at

length from the records in various languages in an almost overwhelming mass which I have been able to collect.

From Mahadji's death (1794) to the British conquest of Delhi, the tale is well-known and if I tell it will be merely to round my work off.

JADUNATH SARKAR.

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" 18, " 7 " *bon mots* " *bons mots*

" 200, *f. note* " Pears " Pearls

Pp. 96-97 *f. note* Peshwā's route.—Majgram (modern *Mejiā,* 24 m. n.w.. of Kaksha, s. of the Dāmodar.) (Sirāpur (mod. *Sirpurā,* 14 m. w. of Mejia.) Bedo, 5 m. s.w. of Sirpurā (2 m. from Khajura Rl. Stn.) Saka (mod. *Sānkā,* Rl. Stn. on Adra-Gomoh Line.) Bhaigatha (mod. *Bāikāthā;* Chhadrā is a Rl. Stn. on Adra-Purulia Line.) Hisak (mod. *Hesā,* 12 m. s.w. of Chhadrā and 8 m. s.w. of Purulia.) *J. C. Ray.*

P. 208, *add note* :—Sābir's tomb is situated behind the Jama Masjid of Lāhor.

FALL OF THE MUGHAL EMPIRE

CHAPTER I

Muhammad Shah's Reign after Nadir's departure.

§ 1. *Life-story of the Delhi Empire.*

The first Muslim State of Delhi was born at the close of the Twelfth century, and from this centre it continued to expand with varying fortunes for two hundred years till at last it embraced the whole of Northern India and even overflowed into the Southern land beyond the Vindhya range. Thus all Hindustan came to be placed under one civilization, one official language, and during some short spasmodic periods under one sceptre also. Then, at the end of the Fourteenth century came the hopeless decadence of the royal house ; the unifying and protective Central Government disappeared; the Empire was broken up into jarring fragments whose mutual conflicts and the consequent set back to culture and material prosperity fill the next century and a quarter, till 1526, when the Turkish adventurer Bābur laid the foundation of a mightier political structure in

India. This new-born Mughal Empire, after a short and all but fatal contest with the Afghān house of Sur, became established beyond challenge under Bābur's grandson Akbar soon after 1560. In the succeeding hundred and thirty years, its growth in territory, wealth, armed strength, art and industry was rapid, uninterrupted, and dazzling to the eyes of the Asiatic world and even of lands beyond the confines of Asia. The whole of Hindustan and much of the Deccan too bowed under one sceptre; administrative and cultural uniformity was given to all parts of this continent of a country; the artery roads were made safe for the trader and the traveller; the economic resources of the land were developed; and close intercourse was opened with the outer world. With peace, wealth, and enlightened Court patronage, came a new cultivation of the Indian mind and advance of Indian literature, painting, architecture and handicrafts, which raised this land once again to the front rank of the civilized world. Even the formation of an Indian nation did not seem an impossible dream.

But in the second half of Aurangzib's reign we first see this natural progress arrested, and then, after a quarter century of heroic struggle by that monarch, when at last he closed his aged eyes in death (1707) we find that decline had

unmistakably set in; Indo-Mughal civilization, whose agent was the Empire of Delhi, was now a spent bullet; its life was gone, it had no power for good left in it. But dissolution did not take place immediately after Aurangzib's death. His wonderful capacity, strength of character, and lifelong devotion to duty had generated a force which held together the frame of the Delhi Government seemingly unchanged for thirty years after him. Whatever might happen in the frontier provinces, the Central Government still stood intact. But with a succession of weaklings and imbeciles on the throne, the downfall of the Empire was bound to come at last. The dry rot in the heart of the Mughal State manifested itself publicly when Bāji Rāo's cavalry insulted the imperial capital in 1737 and his example invited Nādir Shāh's invasion and the utter collapse of the Government of Delhi in 1739.

§ 2. *India after Nādir Shāh's invasion.*

By the end of April 1739 the horrors of Nādir's conquest came to a natural close in Delhi. Laden with the plundered treasure of the richest empire in Asia, the Persian conqueror left the Mughal capital on his homeward march on 5th May. Eight days later the Emperor Muhammad Shāh held his first public audience after his

restoration and coins were once more stamped in his name, replacing those issued for Nādir Shāh in the interval. The Court chroniclers record that on this occasion the nobles offered their presents and the Emperor on his side conferred robes of honour and rewards on them. [*D.C.*] Thus the usual ceremonies of the imperial *darbār* were gone through as if no political disaster of the first magnitude had taken place in the meantime. But nobody present could forget that things were not as before the Persian invader's coming. The Emperor and his wazir were there as before, but the second officer of the realm—the Head of the Army, Khān-i-Daurān, had perished as well as Sādat Khan Burhān-ul-mulk, the most powerful of the provincial governors, and the Emperor's personal favourite Muzaffar Khān, besides a host of officers of lower rank but high connections. Ten to twelve thousands of the regular soldiery had fallen on the field of Karnāl and 20,000 people had been put to the sword within the city of Delhi itself. Sack and massacre had devastated lesser towns like Thāneshwar, Pānipat, Sonipat etc. The imperial treasury and the nobles' mansions had been drained dry to supply the indemnity exacted by the victor,—fifteen *krores* of rupees in cash besides jewellery rich clothing and furniture worth 50 *krores* more. The imperial regalia had

been robbed of its two most famous and costly ornaments, the Koh-i-nur diamond and the Peacock Throne. The imperial family and the proudest peers had been forced to descend to a still lower depth of humiliation. The Khurāsāni leather-coat weaver's son had married his son to a princess of the family of the Pādishāh, and he had dragged to his bed all the handsome wives and maiden daughters of Muzaffar Khan, lately killed in battle. [Ashub, ii. 367 and 375.]

In the months immediately following Nādir Shāh's invasion Heaven seemed to have taken pity on the sorely afflicted people of Northern India. In the next season there was adequate and timely rainfall, the earth yielded a profuse harvest, and all foodstuffs became cheap and plentiful, "as if to make amends for the people's recent sufferings." (Ashub, ii. 416.) But Nature is not half so much the cause of a nation's misery as Man. To outer seeming, "dignity and splendour returned to the Delhi Court after Nādir had left India, and the Emperor and the nobles turned to the management of State affairs and gave up all sorts of uncanonical practices." (*Ibid.*) But the moral canker in the Mughal Empire was too deeply seated to be killed by such outward show of piety and obedience to lifeless convention. A Nemesis worked itself out inexorably on the

destiny of the Empire from the character of the Emperor and his leading ministers.

§ 3. *Character of Muhammad Shah.*

Muhammad Shāh* had come to the throne in 1719 at the age of 17. For seven years before that event he had been kept under confinement in the palace harem and had received no education such as might fit a man to rule a kingdom or lead an army. He possessed natural intelligence and a good deal of foresight; but the fate of his predecessors, who had been set up and pulled down by their wazirs, effectually crushed any desire that he might have once had to rule for himself and to keep his nobles under control. He, therefore, totally withdrew himself from public business, leaving it to his ministers, and plunged into a life of pleasure and amusement, hardly ever going out of Delhi during his 28 years of reign, except to visit parks in the neighbourhood (usually at Loni) and occasionally to see the annual fair at Garh Mukteshwar (a hundred miles east of Delhi). His only two military movements were to follow in his wazir's train in the short and futile campaigns against Nādir Shāh and Ali Muhammad Ruhela.

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* Ānandrām 309, Wārid 117-118, *Siyar* iii. 25, Shākir 33, *Chahār Gulzār* 397*a*-398*a*, *TAh.* 2*b*, Ashub ii 420; *Bayān*, 242-244; *TAh.* 2.

At his accession he was a fresh youth, extremely handsome, large and strong of limb. But his sedentary life of inactivity and sexual excess soon impaired his constitution and he became a confirmed invalid by the time he was only forty. The evil was aggravated by his taking to opium, and this drug habit made him weak and emaciated, till at last it became impossible to move him from his palace.

His sole diversion outside the harem was witnessing animal fights on the sandy bank of the Jamunā below the window of morning salute in the Delhi palace, occasionally varied by the cares of a bird-fancier. We can understand his wish to enjoy from a safe distance the excitement of the heroic and dangerous game of elephant-combats, which his forefathers had reserved as an imperial prerogative. But when we read how Muhammad Shah spent his morning hours not in doing public justice or holding State councils, but in viewing a wrestling match between two bears, or a fight by "three pairs of bears, a goat, a ram, and a wild boar, which were wrapped in tiger skins and trained to attack an elephant" (as he is recorded to have done on 25th April 1743), we wonder whether such spectacles would be considered a worthy diversion by any one outside a nursery unless he were a vulgar country clown, and

whether the lord of a hundred and fifty million souls at the ripe age of 41 had no more serious use for his time and no higher tastes. [*Akhbārāt.*]

When the fires of youthful passions burnt themselves out, a deep melancholy settled on Muhammad Shāh, and towards the end of his life he loved to frequent the society of *faqirs* and to hold long converse with them, discussing spiritual questions like an initiate. Three such hermits became his spiritual guides, and the Court nobles and the common people followed his example.*

Thus, throughout his long reign the adminis- tration was utterly neglected by its supreme head, the nobles divided the land and political power among themselves or fought for these things, as if no master existed over them. Muhammad Shāh would assent to every good advice of his wazir or any other minister, but could never summon up enough courage to take the necessary step; like other weak men he found supreme wisdom in put- ting off action from day to day, till a crisis

* "His Majesty gave Shāh Mubārak the title of Burhān-ul-tariqat, Shah Badda that of Burhān-ul-haqiqat, and Shāh Ramz Fasih-ul-bayān, and used often to frequent their company. All the ministers and rich lords followed suit. Other people also imitated, so much so that the bazar craftsmen in the villages of every province put on imitation [initiates'] turbans on their heads and *taqdir* tunics on their backs, till at last even the women took up the fashion." (Shākir, 33.)

precipitated itself and things took their own turn. Such a man was destined to go through life as a puppet moved by his favourites, who were shrewd men with the most charming manners and strength of character, and this was Muhammad Shāh's ignoble fate too.

But though he was a mere cypher in respect of his public duties, there were some redeeming traits in his private character. Naturally timid and wavering, he was also free from insolent pride, caprice and love of wanton cruelty. Nor did he lack consideration for others and courage of a certain kind, as was illustrated when, instead of fleeing to Bengal as advised by his friends, he voluntarily went forth into Nādir's captivity in order to save his people and capital from the horrors of violent assault and forcible subjugation to incensed victors. "He never gave his consent to shedding blood or doing harm to God's creatures.* In his reign the people passed their lives

* The following anecdote given in *Chahār-Gulzār* (397 *a*) is characteristic :—One night a Baksari foot-soldier placed as guard over the imperial jewel-house dug a hole in its roof, entered it, and stole a jewelled necklet (*kanthi*). When trying to creep out of the hole, he fell down on the floor, broke his leg, and lay there helpless. Next day he was discovered there and taken before the Emperor. Muhammad Shah asked him, "O shameless wretch! You committed theft where you were appointed a watchman. Could you not find any other place more appropriate for stealing in?" The Baksari replied, "My salary for 12 months is

in ease, and the empire outwardly retained its dignity and prestige. The foundations of the Delhi monarchy were really rotten, but Muhammad Shāh by his cleverness kept them standing. He may be called the last of the rulers of Bābur's line, as after him the kingship had nothing but the name left to it." [*Siyar*, iii. 25.]

Such was the head of the State in India in the second quarter of the Eighteenth century. We shall now examine the character of his highest instruments.

§ 4. *Character of Wazir Qamr-ud-din Khan.*

Ever since the death of Aurangzib, the Pādishāh had been a non-entity,—Bahādur Shāh I by reason of his age and softness of nature, and his successors because they were mere puppets set up and moved by their prime ministers. Therefore, the destiny of India's millions lay in the hands of the wazirs, and the wazir's character and strength of position alone determined the nature of the administration in an empire of continental vastness.

The first wazir of Muhammad Shāh after the

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due from Government. It is not fair that my salary should remain in this room and I should commit theft elsewhere. I also thought that there could be no better place than the Emperor's palace for stealing." The Emperor smiled at the reply, paid the man his arrears of salary and retained him in service as a watchman!

overthrow of the Sayyid brothers was Muhammad Amin Khān (surnamed Itimād-ud-daulah I), the son of the Nizām's grandfather's brother. He was installed in office in November 1720, but died only two months later (16th January 1721), men said as a divine chastisement for his having helped to shed the blood of the Prophet's kith and kin (the Sayyids of Barha). Nizām-ul-mulk succeeded him, but being thwarted by the false and fickle Emperor and his unscrupulous confidants, he at last resigned in disgust, in 1724. The next wazir was Qamr-ud-din (entitled Itimād-ud-daulah II),* the son of Muhammad Amin Khan. He was a great drunkard, but, happily for the people, an extremely indolent man. For the quarter century (1724-1748) that he held the supreme office in the realm, the administration merely drifted along, under this harmless kind old man, who always foresaw the trend of affairs and the effect of every measure, but never had the courage to tell the honest truth to his master or dissuade him from any wrong course on which his heart was set. In fact, he considered it supreme wisdom merely to keep his post and do as little work as possible.

And yet the condition of the empire, even before Nādir Shāh gave it the death stab, was such

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*Ashub ii. 422, *Siyar* iii. 13 and 24-25, *Chahār Gulzār* 398*b*.

that only a wise, strong and active wazir, exercising dictatorial power, could have saved it. On the contrary, king and minister alike were now more dead than alive. As the historian Wārid, whose youth had been nurtured in the dignified and strenuous reign of Aurangzib, wrote in the bitterness of his heart about the times of Muhammad Shāh, "For some years past it has been the practice of the imperial Court that whenever the officers of the Deccan or Gujrāt and Mālwa reported any Marāthā incursion to the Emperor, His Majesty, in order to soothe his heart afflicted by such sad news, either visited the gardens—to look at the newly planted and leafless trees,—or rode out to hunt in the plains, while the grand wazir Itimād-ud-daulah Qamr-ud-din Khān went to assuage his feelings by gazing at the lotuses in some pools situated four leagues from Delhi, where he would spend a month or more in tents, enjoying pleasure or hunting fish in the rivers and deer in the plains. At such times Emperor and wazir alike lived in total forgetfulness of the business of the administration, the collection of the revenue, and the needs of the army. No chief, no man, thinks of guarding the realm and protecting the people, while these disturbances daily grow greater." [*Mirāt-i-Wāridāt,* 117-118.]

§ 5. *Factions at Court.*

With a foolish, idle, and fickle master on the throne, the nobles began to give free play to the worst forms of selfishness. They found it necessary to form parties of their own for their support and advancement, and even for their very existence. The controlling and unifying centre of the government having ceased to function, disintegration became inevitable in the Court itself. The instinct of self-preservation drove the nobles to group themselves in factions according to race, to divide the administration among themselves, and to gird themselves around with a body of clients from among the vassal princes and the provincial governors. The Court was divided into two armed camps of Turānis and Irānis, each with its hand ever on the hilt of its dagger, and this civil dissension spread throughout the realm.

Itimād-ud-daulah II, as became an emigrant from Samarqand, was the patron of the Turānis, while his rivals and enemies perforce joined the opposite party, composed of the Persians, whose leadership after the death of Sādat Khan (March 1739), was taken by Abul Mansur Khan Safdar Jang, the *subahdār* of Oudh. And the history of the later Mughals, from 1736 onwards is only the history of the duel between these parties. After

1765, when Oudh became a dependency of the English and the Nizām entirely dissociated himself from Northern India, the imperial Court continued to be the same scene of struggle, though the competitors for power now were mostly Afghāns or individual adventurers of other races, rather than parties knit together by tribal connection.

§ 6. *Cause of empire's ruin.*

Where the king has no inborn capacity to rule a realm, government by a responsible prime minister is the only alternative, unless administration is to disappear from the country and the State to break up. But no *fainéant* Mughal Emperor would give his wazir the same chance of working that George II gave to Walpole or Pitt with the happiest results for both king and people. Muhammad Shāh, like Farrukh-siyar, was too imbecile and inconstant to inaugurate any statesmanlike policy, conduct operations in the field, or control his officers; but he had cunning enough to countenance and even initiate conspiracies among his personal favourites against the publicly responsible wazir and secretly to lend the prestige of his name to the rebellions of the wazir's rivals. Therefore, an honest and capable wazir, under such a sovereign, would soon discover that if he

insisted on administrative vigour and purity or tried to force honesty and consistency of policy on the Emperor, he would be only courting his own death, and that if he wished to escape the fate of the Sayyid brothers he must give up all noble ambitions and statesmanly projects and swim with the current, leaving the realm to drift. He would probably console himself with the belief that if the State escaped a catastrophe in his own time, he had done enough for one man.

In the Court of Delhi as it stood after Nādir Shāh's departure, Qamr-ud-din Khan Itimād-ud-daulah was the wazir or Chancellor as before. The office next in importance, namely, that of the Army Chief (*Mir Bakhshi*) with the title of Amir-ul-umarā, had been recently bestowed upon Asaf Jāh Nizām-ul-mulk, a cousin of the wazir.

Both of them continued at these posts during the remainder of the reign. The head of the imperial household, called the *Khān-i-sāmān* (Lord High Steward) was Lutfullah Khan; but he died at this time and was succeeded (on 21 May) by Dānishmand Khān, who lived for only twenty days more and then gave place to Saduddin Khān (12th June). This last-named noble also held the office of *Mir Atish* or Chief of Artillery, which gave him control over the imperial palace within the fort and consequently charge of the Emperor's

person and treasures. But his influence was less on the administration of the Government than on the Emperor's mind by reason of the constant personal association with the Emperor which his office ensured. The same was the position of the *Diwān of Crownlands.*

§ 7. *Muhammad Shah governed by favourites.*

But with a timid and unwise sovereign like Muhammad Shāh and an ease-loving negligent wazir like Qamr-ud-din, it was not the high ministers of State that counted so much in shaping the policy of the empire and the fate of the people as the household officers about the Emperor's person and his favourite companions, whose influence was constantly exerted and supreme over his mind.

Throughout life Muhammad Shāh had never thought out any problem or made a decision for himself. He had always been led by his favourites. In early youth he had emerged from the bondage of the Sayyid brothers only to fall completely under the tutelage of a vulgar woman named Koki-ji and her associates, Raushan-ud-daulah of Pānipat and Shāh Abdul Ghaffur.

These three fell from favour and were sent into disgrace in 1732. Thereafter, for seven years the Emperor's feeble mind was dominated over

by Samsām-ud-daulah Khān-i-Daurān and Samsām's brother Muzaffar Khān without a rival. When Samsām and Muzaffar died (1739), they were succeeded as the Emperor's guiding angels by Amir Khān and three other men brought to the Emperor's notice by Amir Khān, namely, Muhammad Ishaq, Asad Yār, and (four years later) Safdar Jang. The life and character of these men therefore deserve study with some fulness.

§ 8. *Amir Khan: His character.*

In the highest place among the Emperor's confidants and personal favourites stood Amir Khān II, Umdat-ul-mulk, a son of that Amir Khān I Mir-i-mirān who had been Aurangzib's famous governor of Kābul during twenty-two years. He belonged to a very high family which was honoured in Persia as well as raised to supreme eminence in India. His father's mother was a daughter of the Empress Mumtāz Mahal's sister and his paternal uncle was Ruhullah Khān I, the ablest Bakhshi of Aurangzib's times, while his own sister was married to Ruhullah Khān II, another Bakhshi of that reign. In spite of such notable connections and incentives to emulation, Amir Khān II never showed any capacity for civil government or war, nor rose to any higher post than the Third Paymastership. But he was a

darling in private life. His remarkable and varied personal accomplishments and cleverness drew scholars and artists to him, while his power of extempore versification, apt reply, eloquent and lucid exposition of every subject, and above all his command of *bon mots* and unfailing skill in jesting made his conversation irresistibly fascinating and gave him boundless influence over the frivolous Muhammad Shāh's mind. Some foundation was given to his reputation for wisdom by his versatile general knowledge of many things and his power of quickly mastering the details of any kind of work. But his real capacity was insignificant. In the end pride led to his tragic downfall. His complete sway over the Emperor's mind turned his head and he came to despise and insult the highest nobles of the realm, as is well illustrated by his reply to the wazir and the Nizām, "So long as the shadow of my master's grace is over my head, I am prepared to confront Gabriel and Michael, not to speak of peers like you." [Shākir, 86, *Siyar,* iii. 13.]

§ 9. *Muhammad Ishaq Khan I.*

Muhammad Ishaq Khān I, surnamed Mutaman-ud-daulah, was still dearer than Amir Khan to the Emperor. His father, who had emigrated from Shustar is Persia to seek his

fortune in India, did not rise very high. Ishaq himself was for long a petty subaltern in the imperial artillery on a cash salary of Rs. 200 a month. He was an accomplished speaker and ready versifier in Persian, which was his mother tongue, and his elegance of taste, perfect manners and innate discretion made him easily take the foremost place in society far above his official rank. He attached himself as a private companion (*musāhib*) to Amir Khan II, both being Persians by race and Shias by faith, and soon won his heart. Amir Khan could not help praising this jewel of a companion to the Emperor, who asked to see him. Muhammad Ishaq was presented; the Emperor was charmed with his accomplished manners and smooth tongue and immediately enlisted him among his personal attendants (*khawās*.) Ishaq was day and night present with Muhammad Shāh during the terrible period of Nādir's invasion. While the Emperor was staying in the Persian conqueror's tents at Karnāl, Ishaq's speech and judgment, in a man occupying such a low position, so favourably impressed Nādir that he asked Muhammad Shāh, "When you had Muhammad Ishaq, what need was there for you to appoint Qamr-ud-din as wazir?"

When the Pādishāh stole back to Delhi from his camp at Karnāl in deep humiliation, Ishaq

accompanied him on the same elephant and tried to keep up his spirits. By this time he had completely cast his spell over the Emperor's heart and his rise was startlingly rapid. On 3rd June 1739, from superintendent of the royal gardens at Delhi he was promoted inspector of the Crown Prince's contingent, and soon afterwards reached the summit of his greatness as Diwān of the Crown-lands with the rank of a 6-*hazari* and the title of Mutaman-ud-daulah, besides a plurality of minor lucrative posts, and finally (on the 8th of November) received the highest insignia of honour called the *māhi* and *murātib*. But his meteoric career ended as rapidly in his death within a few months (18th April 1740).

Ishaq was a devoted and sincere well-wisher of the Emperor and honestly gave him very sound advice regardless of his own interests. [*Siyar*, ii. 100]. He enjoyed the Emperor's greatest confidence and favour and never abused his power. His eldest son, Mirzā Muhammad, who succeeded to his title as Ishaq Khān II, (Najm-ud-daulah) in 1740 and seven years later (13th Aug. 1747) to his post of Diwān-i-Khālsa, gained the Emperor's trust and personal affection in an even greater degree than his father and "became the Emperor's life as it were," so much so that Muhammad Shah used to say, "If Muhammad

Ishaq Khan had not left Mirzā Muhammad behind him, I do not know how I could have survived him.'' Other sons of the first Ishaq Khān rose to high rank in the Emperor's service and his daughter (later known as Bahu Begam) was married, by the Emperor's express command, to Safdar Jang's son and heir Shujā-ud-daulah and became the mother of Nawāb Asaf-ud-daulah of Oudh. [*Siyar*, iii. 3, *Chahār Gulzār*, 387 *b*.]

§ 10. *Asad Yar Khan.*

Another *protege* of Amir Khān was Asad Yār Khān, a native of Agra. After filling some very subordinate offices, he was introduced to the Emperor by Amir Khān on 3rd June 1739, and immediately created a 5-*hazāri* and *Dārogha of harkārahs* or Postmaster-General and Head of the Intelligence Department. In time he rose to the rank of a 6-*hazāri* with the title of Asad-ud-daulah and the *māhi* and *murātib* insignia of the highest grade of the peerage (8 Nov.)

Though his education in the arts and sciences had been elementary, he had a very agreeable well-balanced nature and could compose *impromptu* verses in Persian, which were pleasant to hear though not marked by scholarship. Benevolent and discreet, he never shut his doors on the crowds of suitors who daily thronged the audience

chambers of the great, but had a kind word for every one. Well-born persons, however poor and low of rank, were treated by him like friends and brothers. His perfect courtesy and consideration for others made all men like him. Though Amir Khan in the end turned hostile to him out of envy and got his troops (*Shamshir-dāgh*) disbanded by influencing the Emperor, Asad Yār continued grateful for the Khān's early favours, and sold his own jewels and household goods to discharge the dues of Amir Khan's unpaid and mutinous troops and thus saved his former patron from insult and outrage. [*Chahār Gulzār*, 383; *Siyar*, iii. 11.]

§ 11. *Safdar Jang.*

Mirzā Muqim, entitled Abul Mansur Khān and Safdar Jang, was the nephew and son-in-law of the late S'ādat Khān Burhān-ul-mulk and succeeded to his *subahdāri* of Oudh immediately after his death (1739). He was now at the maturity of his powers, being about thirty-five years of age, and maintained the best equipped and most martial contingent of troops in the Empire next to the Nizām's. The most valuable core of his army consisted of six to seven thousand Qizilbāshes (*i.e.*, Turks settled in Persia) who had once belonged to Nādir Shah's army, but elected to stay on in India. Safdar Jang was

extremely lavish of money on his army and would pay any price, without the least thought, in order to secure famous captains or good soldiers. Irānian Turks (popularly called 'Mughals' in India) were the best fighting material then available in Asia; these were his special favourites and he paid them Rs. 50 a month per trooper against Rs. 35 only which India-born horsemen drew. When he reviewed his forces, if his eyes were struck by a soldier's look of smartness or efficiency, he would on the spot raise his pay, by Rs. 10 for a trooper and Rs. 2 for a foot-soldier. In addition to giving high pay, he took care to supply his men with complete equipment and good arms and to keep them in comfort.

The fame of his liberality and personal care for his troops spread abroad and large numbers of recruits flocked to his standard for enlistment. According to one writer, "his Mughal troops numbered 20,000, but among these were many Hindustanis, who dressed themselves as 'Mughals,' spoke the Persian tongue, and drew the [higher] pay. This was especially the case with men from the district of Jadibal in Kashmir, who were all Shias," like Safdar Jang himself. In short, he came to be looked upon as the sword arm of the Shia party in India. His character will be described in the course of the history of

the next reign when he dominated the stage for five years. [*Imād-us-Sādat*, 31, Ashub, ii. 419-420.]

Such being the real state of things at Court in the last nine years of Muhammad Shāh's reign, we can more easily understand the shape that events took during that period.

§ 12. *Imperial administration breaks down.*

When Nādir Shāh left India, the administration of the Mughal Empire seemed to have been dissolved by the shock of the foreign invasion. In provinces where there was no strong governor public peace disappeared as the people lost their wonted fear of a Government which was now so utterly discredited. Predatory instincts, so long kept in check by Mughal rule or imperial prestige, now asserted themselves in the very heart of the Empire. Thus, we read in the *Chahār Gulzār* (f. 373*a*) that in the year following Nādir's invasion a large number of Jāts and Sikhs gathered together, marched towards Sarhind and created a great disturbance there, by setting up one Darānāt Shāh as their chieftain and seizing many villages. They were subdued only after an expedition had been sent from the Court under Azim-ullah Khān. In another corner of India, when the Peshwā Bālāji Rāo's agent was conveying the money that

the Nawāb of Bengal had paid to him as subsidy for armed help against Raghuji Bhonslé (1743), this agent, though escorted by some troops of the governor of Patna, was attacked and robbed of his money at Saserām, by a Persian soldier of fortune who had entered the Oudh *subahdār's* service. (*Siyar,* iii. 7.) In the Ganges-Jamunā Doab, Ali Muhammad Ruhela, a former retainer of the local governor, "daily increased his power during the neglect following Nādir Shāh's invasion, when no noble of the Court gave a thought to him. He used to plunder the districts in his neighbourhood and brought the whole country up to the Kumāun hills under his control. Strong in the strength of his fort (of Bangarh), he attacked the imperial territory and dreamt of rivalling Sher Shāh and Salim Shāh." (Ashub, ii. 423-424.)

But there was no army under the Emperor to enforce peace and order. During Nādir's invasion many of the imperial troops had fallen in the battle of Karnāl or in the massacre of Delhi, and the survivors had dispersed to all sides in order to escape from the prevailing disorder and scarcity of food. Thus, Muhammad Shāh on his restoration found himself practically defenceless. Asad Yār Khān, a new favourite and a very wise and thoughtful man, convinced him of the urgency of the case and secured his permission to enlist

10,000 soldiers on a monthly salary of Rs. 50 for each trooper and infantryman taken together. The horses of this cavalry were ordered to be branded with the mark of the sword and hence the entire corps was called the *Shamshir-dāgh risāla.* (1740) [*Chahār Gul.* 373*a.*]

§ 13. *Amir Khān's plot to overthrow the wazir.*

Amir Khān and his *protege* Ishaq Khān having been installed in the Emperor's supreme confidence (1739), these Persian Shias began to work for the overthrow of the Turāni Sunni nobles, whose leaders were the two highest officers of the realm, *viz.,* the *Wazir* Qamruddin and the *Bakhshi* Asaf Jāh Nizām-ul-mulk. The Emperor had long been harbouring a distrust of his Turāni nobles, and their conduct during the late Persian invasion had only confirmed his belief in their utter selfishness and disloyalty. He therefore lent a ready ear to the counsels of Amir Khān. The plan hatched in the secrecy of the innermost circle of the palace was to remove Qamruddin from the wazirship and appoint Amir Khān, who persuaded the Emperor that he himself could fill that office with greater success and benefit to his master.

But how to bell the cat? The richest and best-armed noble in the realm, the Nizām, was

the cousin and ally of Qamruddin, and common danger was sure to knit them together still more closely. It was, therefore, decided to effect the change of *wazirs* after the Nizām had left the Court for his viceroyalty of the Deccan and had gone too far off to assist his cousin in Delhi. On 3rd April 1740, the Nizām set out from Delhi to march to the Deccan where his presence was demanded by the increasing Marāthā pressure on his son and deputy Nāsir Jang. But he halted outside the capital at Jaisinghpura for some days in order to complete his preparations for the journey.

Amir Khān could hold himself no longer. He talked high in his private circle as if the wazirship had been already bestowed on him,* and he spoke with insolent contempt of Qamruddin. His words were reported by tale-bearers to the wazir, who easily divined the nature of the plot against him, and wrote to the Nizām a full report of the state of affairs at Court and sought his advice. The Nizām replied counselling his cousin not to court the fate and infamy of the Sayyid

* I disbelieve the story in *Siyar* (ii. 99) that as soon as the Nizām marched out of Delhi, Muhammad Shāh secretly invested Amir Khān with the badge of the wazir's office (a golden pen-case) and that Amir Khān's reckless impatience revealed the secret.

brothers by taking up arms against his ungrateful master, but to resign, leave the worthless Emperor to his own devices, and accompany the Nizām to the Deccan.

The Delhi exchequer was empty, the secret hoards of the palace had been carried away by the Persian conqueror, the provinces were withholding their tribute and the managers of the Crown-lands their due revenue. Thus the Court of Delhi was faced with starvation. In trying to squeeze money out of the nobles, Amir Khān precipitated the crisis. He advised the Emperor to enforce the old rule of escheating the property of deceased nobles. Badr-ud-din, a son of the wazir Qamruddin, having recently died leaving property worth 12½ *lakhs* of Rupees, Amir Khān on behalf of the Emperor demanded from the wazir the rent-roll of the *jāgirs* of his late son, with a view to resuming the grant. The wazir sent him a note of warning, saying, "If in recompense for his servants' sacrifice of their lives for him, the Emperor resumes their *jāgirs,* what hope of promotion and support can his hereditary slaves, devoted to him till eternity, have?" To this Amir Khān replied insolently, "So long as the shadow of my master rests on my head, I am prepared to confront Gabriel and Michael, not to speak of two lords like you and Asaf Jāh"! (Shākir, 84.)

§ 14. *Emperor's fear and hesitation, and fall of Amir Khān.*

The plot was fully unmasked by this time. Qamruddin immediately left Delhi, joined the Nizām in the suburbs, and wrote to the Emperor, "I have never been, nor will I ever be, disloyal to my sovereign. But as I have lost his favour, I beg to resign my post and leave it to him to get my work done by some one more in his confidence."

This letter and the news of the junction of the wazir and the Nizām in anger with him thoroughly cowed the chicken-hearted Muhammad Shāh. In utter perplexity and alarm he summoned Amir Khān and Ishaq Khān for counsel. Then ensued an amusing scene truly characteristic of the empire's degeneration. Amir Khān insisted on their past agreement. The Emperor remained silent and then sent Amir Khān away for the day. He next took Ishaq Khan apart to his private chamber and urged him with the most solemn oaths to give him without fear or favour the counsel that he considered really best for the State. Ishaq Khān had been raised from obscurity by Amir Khān and had promised him never to give the Emperor any counsel opposed to the policy of his first patron. He was now in a dilemma and

remained silent. Muhammad Shāh again took the strongest oaths and asked for his honest advice. Ishaq explained the conflict between his duty to his two patrons and begged to be excused from giving any answer. Then for the third time the Emperor asked for his advice and with still stronger entreaty. So, Ishaq Khān had no help but to reply. He said, "Although Amir Khān is an *āmir* and the son of an *āmir* and possessed of bravery and skill in making arrangements, yet he is known to the nobility and populace of Hindustan as light in character and manner. I and certain other nobles were raised to the peerage (*mansab*) only yesterday. But Asaf Jāh and Itimād-ud-daulah are regarded by all the leading people of Hind with eyes of expectation, and obedience to them is considered as a gain and a blessing. In my humble opinion it is inexpedient to break with such chiefs in reliance upon men like us. You are the best judge of your own interests."

On hearing this, Muhammad Shāh fell back from his purpose and decided to conciliate Itimāduddaulah and Asaf Jāh. Next day Amir Khān, on coming to the Emperor, found him entirely changed from their previous agreement. Muhammad Shāh told him, "It is not wise to antagonise the Turāni nobles, who have such absolute power. The best policy is to conciliate

them. You, in loyalty to me, ought to refrain from doing anything that may excite their anger or hostility." (*Siyar*, ii. 99-100.)

The wazir-to-be discovered that he was not to be. Amir Khān's game was lost; he found that in hoping to oust Qamruddin with the Emperor's support he had been leaning on a broken reed. Only one way was left for saving his master and himself; it was an abject surrender. He was sent to the two nobles, as from the Emperor, with his wrists tied together with a handkerchief like a culprit's, and delivered this message from his master, "This man has offended against you. Do what you like with him." The defeated plotter excused himself by laying all the blame on the wicked advice of Ishaq Khan and other courtiers! The two nobles considered such a man as beneath their contempt, but the Nizām commanded him, under the guise of advice, to leave the Court: "Now that differences have arisen between you and the wazir, it is best that you should go away from the Court to your province of Allahabad for some time." (Ashub, ii. 418, *Siyar*, ii. 100.)

Thus Amir Khān was removed from the society of the Emperor where he had so long been only making mischief. He delayed his departure from the capital as long as he could under various

pretexts, in the hope of something turning up in the meantime, but the Nizām was inexorable and refused to leave Delhi before Amir Khān had been actually expelled. Nearly four months were thus wasted. At last Amir Khān set out for Allahabad, and then the Nizām began his southward march from the Jaisinghpura suburb (27th July 1740.) In the meantime Ishaq Khān had died on 18th April, and the Emperor's Court was purged of the Irāni intriguers.

§ 15. *Maratha invasion of Bengal Bihar and Orissa, steps taken by the imperial Government.*

Three uneventful years passed in this state, and then the political chess-board underwent a dramatic change. While on the North-western frontier profound peace and even safe defence were purchased by the cession of the trans-Indus provinces to the king of Persia, a new danger arose in the east. From April 1742 the Marāthas of Nāgpur began to make annual raids into Bengal Bihār and Orissā which were to continue for nine years and end only with the loss of Orissā to the Empire. The danger even threatened to overflow from Bihār westwards into Allahabad at a time when the Emperor had secured peace on the south by the virtual surrender of Mālwa to the Peshwā. In the autumn of 1742, the Emperor, in response

to the Bengal *subahdār's* urgent appeals for aid, ordered Safdar Jang (the *subahdār* of Oudh) to march into Bihār, and if necessary into Bengal also, and restore the imperial authority there by expelling the Marāthas. As the price of this service, Safdar Jang's possessions were increased by handing over Chunār fort to him. The inner meaning of this affair needs explanation.

In his enforced exile from the royal presence, Amir Khān had been spending three years at Allahabad and constantly writing to the Emperor and brooding over the means of regaining his position at Court. His success depended on his getting on his side an able general at the head of a powerful army who might naturally serve as a counterpoise to the Nizām. This sword-arm of the Persian Shia party he discovered in his near neighbour Safdar Jang, the *subahdār* of Oudh, and he now turned all his plans to enhancing his power, as he had once elevated Ishaq Khān I. Taking advantage of the Marātha invasion of the eastern provinces. Amir Khān played upon the imbecile Emperor's greed to push his own plan through. Since the viceroyalty of Murshid Quli Khān (1707-1727), the province of Bengal Bihar and Orissa had practically become independent under his family. Though the surplus revenue was regularly sent by the *subahdār* to the imperial

Court, yet he was his own master in the matter of the appointment and control of officers and the expenditure of public money. Alivardi Khān (officially entitled Hisāmuddaulah Mahābat Jang), who had seized the viceroyalty of Bengal by killing Murshid Quli Khan's grandson Sarāfrāz Khān (*c.* 10 April 1740), delayed in sending to the Emperor the property of the last two *subahdārs* (Shujā Khān and Sarāfrāz Khan) which had legally lapsed to the State and which would have been most welcome at the starving Court of Delhi. This was Amir Khān's opportunity. He wrote to the Emperor, "Now that Alivardi Khān, the slayer of his master, is entangled with the Marāthas and has no force to spare, if you order Safdar Jang he will easily conquer that province for you. Safdar Jang is a loyal servant and will pay you the tribute of the province every year." (*Imād,* 33.)

Muhammad Shāh agreed and wrote to Safdar Jang to that effect. The Oudh *subahdār* marched into Bihār, causing more alarm than relief to the people whom he came professedly to rescue. But by that time (January 1743) Alivardi had gained the upper hand of the invaders and no longer needed help from others. So, Safdar Jang returned from Patna to his own province (early in February.) This futile and short march was

represented to the Emperor as a great achievement and a proof of Safdar Jang's military capacity. Amir Khān induced the Emperor to summon him and Safdar Jang to Court. Similar invitations were issued in August 1743 to the other leading nobles of the provinces and Rājahs, to come to Court and advise the Emperor how to meet the annual Marātha threat to the eastern provinces. [*Siyar*, iii. 5; *Imād* 34.]

§ 16. *Persian influence becomes supreme at Emperor's Court, 1744.*

Amir Khān reached Delhi on 5th November 1743 and at once re-established his old ascendancy on the Emperor's mind. Safdar Jang arrived some eight days later, rode into the city at the head of 10,000 splendidly dressed troopers with full pomp, and was lodged in Dārā Shukoh's mansion within the walls. The Persian influence was now supreme at Court and the Turāni party went down. The post of *Mir Ātish* (Chief of Artillery) was very important, as its holder guarded and controlled the Emperor's person family and treasures within the palace of Delhi. On the death of the last incumbent Sāduddin Khān (on 20 June 1743), this office had been conferred upon his son Hafizuddin, a Turāni and a *protege* of the wazir. But now, on 11th March

1744, it was taken away from him and given to Safdar Jang, at Amir Khān's suggestion, as Muhammad Shāh had lost all faith in his Turāni nobles. Safdar Jang, by virtue of his office, now took up his residence in the palace-fort and pluralities began to come thick upon him.

His influence henceforth swayed the Emperor's counsels as against the wazir's. And the first manifestation of it was the imperial campaign undertaken against Ali Muhammad Khān Ruhela, the lord of Aonla and Bangarh whose patron was the wazir (1745), as will be described in Chapter II.

The Shia influence now rapidly extended itself at Court. Late in 1745 the Emperor dictated a marriage between Safdar's son and heir Shujā-ud-daulah and the sister of his greatest favourite Ishaq Khan II Najmuddaulah. This illustrious lady was Bahu Begam, the tragic heroine of the impeachment of Warren Hastings for the ill-treatment of the Begams of Oudh. On 12th July 1747, Najmuddaulah was appointed *diwān* of the Crownlands, the post held by his father at his death. [*Chahār Gul*, 393; *Imād*, 35.]

§ 17. *Asad Yār Khān's disgrace and death.*

But in this very year 1745 died one of the main pillars of the Persian party at Court, Asad

Yār Khan. His project of raising a new army, the *Shamshir dāgh,* 10,000 strong, had been wrecked on the rock of finance. This force cost 30 *lakhs* of Rupees a year. But after Nādir Shah's retirement, many of the dispersed soldiers of the old imperial army gradually returned to their master's standards, and the State income soon proved insufficient to meet the army bill. So, the Emperor at first decided to discharge half the new *Shamshir dāgh* corps.

Amir Khān on his return to power showered all his favour on his new *protege* Safdar Jang and displayed a mean jealousy of Asad Yār Khān whom he himself had once raised from obscurity to the Emperor's notice. On 24th September 1744, he caused Asad Yār to be removed from the absentee governorship of Kashmir in order to make room for Safdar Jang. He next induced the Emperor to disband the *Shamshir dāgh* altogether on the ground of retrenchment. The soldiers' salary was then in arrears for nine months. When Asad Yār begged the Emperor to pay the sum due (Rs. 22½ *laghs*), Amir Khān objected to the payment saying that the men had enjoyed their salary for 4½ years but done nothing for the State. The weak Emperor therefore refused to clear their arrears. The soldiers, on hearing of it, marched round the palace in a

riotous crowd and meeting Amir Khān, on his way to the audience, in the streets, abused him heartily and pelted him with brick-bats.

Asad Yār at last pacified them by taking the responsibility for their arrears of salary on himself and discharged this self-imposed obligation by selling his household goods and jewels. (*Chahār Gulzār,* 373 *a*—384 *a.*) His troubles only ended with his death, *c.* 15 April 1745.

§ 18. *Murder of Amir Khan, 1746.*

His former patron and later persecutor outlived him only twenty months. Amir Khān had never been remarkable for wisdom or self-control, and now unlimited sway over the Emperor's counsels without the public responsibility of any official duty completely turned his head. During the recent campaign against Ali Muhammad Ruhela there was a widespread public expectation that he would soon replace Qamruddin as wazir. In his insane pride, he acted as if he had already become his master's master and a king-making wazir like Sayyid Husain Ali. He began to press his advice and demands upon the Emperor with disrespectful vehemence and to treat the other nobles with contempt as no better than the rabble. Even personal friends and favourites of Muhammad Shāh, like Ishaq Khān II and his brothers,

suffered public scorn at his hands. The worm turned at last. One day Muhammad Shāh's devoted head eunuch Roz Afzun Khān (the Superintendent of the Palace) ventured to protest against some act or word of Amir Khān as discourteous to their master; immediately there was a scene at Court, the timid Emperor quailed before the torrent of Amir Khān's rage and threats and yielded to his demand that Roz Afzun should be dismissed and a creature of Amir Khān appointed in his place. This change would have made the Emperor the helpless slave of Amir Khān. So, at his instigation Roz Afzun Khān set an aggrieved servant of Amir Khān to stab him to death, on his way to the select Audience, near the lattice-door of the Diwān-i-ām (25 December, 1746.)

The soldiers of Amir Khān's contingent, whose salary he had left unpaid for fourteen months, immediately after his death surrounded his mansion and would not allow his burial to take place till their dues were satisfied. Four days passed in this way, till the corpse began to suffer natural dissolution. Then Safdar Jang took it on himself to discharge this debt, and gave to the soldiers two hostages for the payment, when at last they allowed the Khān's body to be consigned to the grave. And yet this man, though

he was childless, had been thus starving his soldiers and servants, while he had 50 to 60 *lakhs* of Rupees worth of jewellery hoarded in his house. These were now taken by the Emperor at the unfair valuation of ten *lakhs* only. (*Siyar*, iii. 14-15; *Bayān*, 207.)

During the short interval of five months that lay between the death of Amir Khān, the reigning favourite at Delhi, and the crowning of Ahmad Abdāli after Nādir Shāh's death, nothing of importance happened at the imperial Court to vary the tale of the growing disintegration of government and the deepening insolvency of king and nobility.

Two months after Asad Yār Khān's death, Zakariyā Khān, the able governor of the Panjāb, passed away. This event introduced a most momentous change into the fortunes of the Delhi monarchy, which will be narrated in Chapter V.

CHAPTER II.

AFGHAN SETTLEMENTS IN THE GANGETIC DOAB.

§ 1. *Afghans under Mughal rule in India.*

Within half a century of the final Mughal victory over the Pathān power of Delhi (1556), the Afghān ruling houses in different parts of Hindustan were extinguished, and that race had no independent State left to it anywhere in India. True, their brethren in the north-western frontier made many risings in defence of their tribal independence and immemorial practice of highway robbery and disputed the passes that led from India to the Mughal province of Kābul; but the imperial Government always triumphed in the end, whether by arms or by arts. No doubt, isolated bodies of Afghāns lived in many a distinct locality of India, but as subjects or servants of the all-conquering Mughals. Afghān captains and soldiers fought under the banners of the Empire throughout the reigns of Jahāngir, Shāh Jahān and Aurangzib, and Afghān camel-owners and tradesmen followed the Mughal armies for a living throughout the long Deccan wars of the 17th century. But all these were mercenaries;

the Afghān race had no longer any home in India under a chief of their own race even as a great territorial magnate; they possessed no centre of political cohesion, no nucleus for a racial rally.

When a full century had worn out in this manner, the dominant Mughal empire began visibly to weaken and break up. After the accession of Muhammad Shāh, the sovereign was clearly seen to be an impotent shadow; in provinces like Bengal, the Deccan and Oudh the imperial governors began to assert their ambition and to found local dynasties, independent in all but the name. Their example in no time impressed the Afghāns who had never forgotten that the Timurids were mere interlopers and had robbed their own race of the empire of Hindustan. Why should they not follow the path of these viceroys or even try to recover their lost dominion over India? The invasion of Nādir Shāh robbed the Mughal Emperor of the last shred of prestige and proved him to be a hollow phantom of power. Divinity ceased to hedge in the sovereign of Delhi and force no longer feared to raise its head against him. The succession of a king of their own race to Nādir Shāh's glorious heritage in 1747 and his military fame as the ablest of Nādir's lieutenants roused the ambition of the Indian Afghāns to the highest pitch of ardour.

But long before that date the ground was being silently prepared for them.

§ 2. *Afghān settlements in the Doab.*

Descendants of the older Pathān ruling caste of the 15th and 16th centuries were now settled as peaceful landholders or captains of mercenaries in Orissā, Sylhet, Dārbhangā and Allahabad. But fresh bodies of immigrants from their mountain homeland streamed into India in the 17th century and created a large and compact new centre of Afghān population much closer to Delhi than these places.* The newcomers interposed

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* For Afghan settlements and their early history,—Atkinson's *N. W. P. Gazetteer* (1st. ed.), *Farrukhabad* pp. 152-158, *Budaun* 105-109, *Bareilly* 656-671, *Bijnor* 348-350, *Shahjahanpur* 142-145.

The histories written for these Afghan chiefs by their secretaries were all much *later* than 1750, while the Persian local histories of this region were composed in the 19th century. They contain many errors, some of which can be corrected from the *contemporary* histories of the Delhi empire used by me. Afghan sources are the basis of the historical narrative in G. Forster's *Journey from Bengal to England* ("History of the Rohillas", i. 101-130) and the Life of Hafiz Rahmat Khan (tr. by C. Elliott, 1831.) R. S. Whiteway's *Ruhela Afghans* (in the *Calcutta Review*, Vol. LXI, 1875, pp. 201-225), though copiously drawn upon in the *N. W. P. Gazetteer*, is palpably erroneous in many points and has no source independent of the above. The most valuable and scholarly sketch in the *Gazetteer* is that of W. Irvine in the Farrukhabad volume, but even that requires correction in the light of the fresh material and criticism accumulated since it was written 60 years ago. For the events and traditions before 1739

an almost solid block between the vitally important *subahs* of Delhi and Agra on the west and Oudh and Allahabad on the east, and had grown into a serious menace to the imperial Government by the middle of the 18th century. Their Indian home, formerly known as *Katehr*, now acquired the name of *Rohilkhand* from its new dominant race. It is a tract bounded by the Ganges on the west and the Garrā (also called the Deohā) river on the east, with the Rāmgangā running almost midway between the two. But the Afghān immigrants had two considerable settlements even beyond Rohilkhand as thus defined, namely to the south and east of that province, —stretching west of the Ganges to the Kāli Nadi and beyond, and east of the Garrā up to the Sāi river.

In the first half of the 17th century a number of Afghān captains of the Dāudzāi clan had settled down in what is now called the Shāhjahānpur district, just beyond the north-western corner of the province of Oudh. Their chief town was Shāhjahānpur, colonised by 52 different tribes

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these Afghan sources (whether in Forster, Elliot or the *Gazetteer*) are our only materials. For later events I have relied on other and more authentic sources. Most of the Afghan histories can be consulted in MS. in the Abdus Salam bequest at the Aligarh University.

from Afghānistān (1647.) The fort of Shāhābād, 20 miles south of it, was built some years later. A smaller place, Umrpur, about 10 miles north-west of Shāhjahānpur, was founded by a Yusufzāi Pathān. The Afghān settlements in this eastern-most tract did not form a compact dominion obeying one great chieftain who might have united and led the colonists on to greater power or welded the area into a self-contained district by his possession of the whole of it. It was a mosaic of colonies standing in isolation from one another. From this cause as well as their geographical position, the Afghāns of this tract did not share the fortunes and policy of their brethren further west, but usually gravitated to the politics of the dynasty of Oudh on their eastern border.

§ 3. *Muhammad Bangash of Farrukhabad.*

A second detached area was occupied by the Afghāns of the extreme south-west, i.e., the district immediately south of Rohilkhand proper. This was the domain created by a highly gifted and successful soldier of fortune, Muhammad Khān Bangash, who lived to rise to the highest rank in the Mughal peerage. The area in his possession varied greatly from time to time, but at its greatest extent it included the whole district of Farrukhābād, the western half of Cawnpur,

nearly the whole of Mainpuri and Etāh, two parganahs of Budāun and parts of the Shāhjahānpur, Aligarh and Etāwa districts, some 7500 square miles in all. His family belonged to the Kāghazāi Karlāi clan of the Bangash country in Eastern Afghānistān (*i.e.*, the modern Kohat, Kuram and Paiwar), but he was born at Mau-Rashidābād (now named Qāimganj), a village in the Farrukhābād district, about 1665. At the age of twenty he joined the Pathān freebooters who used to come every year to Katehr and hire themselves out to the local Hindu chieftains in their perpetual intestine wars. In time he rose to be himself a successful leader of mercenaries. His chance came when he sided with Farrukhsiyar in that prince's bid for the Delhi throne (1713). Thereafter his rise was rapid and unbounded. He became a first-grade *mansabdār,* a Nawāb, and imperial viceroy over highly important provinces like Allahabad and Mālwa. His capital was Farrukhābād, a city founded by him in 1714 and named after his patron. On his death (1743) his eldest son, Qāim Khān, succeeded as Nawāb of the principality.

"Muhammad Khān was indeed a man of great energy. His habits were plain and soldierlike. He always wore clothes of the coarsest stuff. In his audience-hall and his house, the only carpets

were rows of common mats. He never boasted, and his manner was not overbearing. His hospitality was great. But . . . we find vices which more than counter-balanced these virtues. Muhammad was cruel and vindictive. In the matter of the fair sex he was far more licentious than becomes a great man." (Irvine, *Farrukh. Gaz.* 157). His harem included only one legitimate wife and 2,600 women of another category. But his territories lacked the homogeneity and strength of the Ruhela State across his eastern border, because they were inhabited merely by a lord and his tenantry and did not form a compact tribal brotherhood with perfect cohesion among all its chiefs and their retainers.

§ 4. *Career of Ali Muhammad Ruhela.*

After having described these fringe-areas, we shall now turn to Rohilkhand proper.

The kernel of the Ruhela power in Northern India was a village at the south-western corner of the Barily district, just across the north-eastern frontier of the district of Budāun. This was acquired early in the 18th century by Dāud, an Afghān soldier of fortune coming from the Qandahār province. By hiring himself and his band of Afghān adventurers out at first to the landowners and then to the imperial governor of

that country, Dāud laid the humble foundations of an estate. On his death (*c.* 1721), his adopted son Ali Muhammad Khān (a converted Jāt boy) succeeded to the command of his retainers and to his programme of ambition. By serving the imperial *faujdār* of Murādābād at times, but more often by dispossessing the local zamindārs and *jāgirdārs,* Ali Muhammad soon built up a fairly large estate in the Barily district, with its chief seat at Aonla, a village 18 miles south-west of Barily city and close to the northern border of the Budāun district.

The dawn of his fortune was the defeat (at Manauna, one mile west of Aonla) and plunder of Muhammad Sālih, a eunuch of the imperial Court, who had been granted a lease of the villages usurped by Ali Muhammad (1727).* The wealth thus secured enabled him to enlist more Afghān soldiers, and his name became an attraction to those who sought a captain whose service promised them victory and plunder. After this success, he ordered high and low to call him Nawāb, appointed the officials usual to a royal Court, and set up a crimson tent for himself, which was an exclusive privilege of the Emperors of Delhi.

* Date given in George Forster's *Journey*, i. 105 *n*, (a not very reliable authority.) He places the death of Harnand in 1740 (i. 106.*n*.)

He also bought the intercession of the wazir Qamruddin Khān and secured from the Court his own appointment as revenue-collector in the place of his victim.

About ten years later he joined the expedition sent out by the wazir for overthrowing Sayyid Saifuddin Ali Khān (a brother of the two deceased Sayyid king-makers) and in the battle near Jansath that followed his Afghan contingent ensured victory to the imperialists by shooting the Sayyid dead. The Delhi Court rewarded Ali Muhammad by giving him the title of Nawāb and the right to play the band (*naubat.*)*

Nādir Shāh's invasion, by temporarily annihilating the Government of Delhi, presented an opportunity of expansion which Ali Muhammad was not slow to seize. He raided and occupied territories right and left. On his aggressions being reported to Court, the wazir,—who held the district of Murādābād in fief,—ordered his local deputy, Rājah Harnand Arora, to expel the Ruhela brigand. But at the village of Asālatpur-Jarrāi, on the Aral river, the Rājah was defeated and slain in a night attack (1741) and all his

* *Siyar,* ii. 92; *G-i-R.* 12. *N. W. P. Gaz.,* iii. 605, places the battle at Bhainsi and in the year 1737. *Jansath* is 23 m. n. of Meerut, while *Bhainsi* is 7 m. w. of Jansath, both in the Muzaffarnagar district. [*Ind. Atlas,* 49 N. E.]

property and war equipment captured by the Afghāns. This far-resounding success immensely increased the resources and fame of the Ruhela upstart; the country lay helpless at his feet, and thousands of Afghāns flocked to his victorious standard. [*Siyar,* ii. 9-10, *Imād,* 42, *G-i-R,* 16; Forster, i. 106.]

After the destruction of Rājah Harnand, Ali Muhammad's power rapidly extended over the entire Barily district and parts of Murādābād, Hardoi and Budāun. The unprincipled wazir, instead of punishing this open outrage upon his master's Government and slaughter of his own agent, thought it better to secure such an ever-victorious chieftain's alliance in his coming contest with his rivals of the Irāni party at Court. He made terms with the Ruhela, accepted his promise of an annual tribute and the hand of his daughter for his eldest son, and secured for him an imperial rescript appointing the usurper as the lawful governor of Katehr, henceforth named "the land of the Ruhelas." The net result was that "the Ruhela power, as represented in the person of Ali Muhammad, spread gradually westwards from a few parganahs in Budāun and Barily (districts.) About 1740 (1741) he managed to annex the bulk of Murādābād." (*Bijnor Gazetteer,* 348.)

Between 1741 and 1748, he spread his conquest in the north and the east, acquiring the Pilibhit district and the kingdom of Kumāun (1742), which latter was reduced to a tributary State. In 1748 he acquired the whole of the Bijnor district.

The political situation of the time greatly favoured his increase of strength. The triumph of Nādir had not only destroyed Afghān rule over Persia but even reduced the tribes of the Qandahār province to vassalage and unemployment. These Afghāns, popularly called *Ruhelas* or hillmen, now crowded into Hindustan for their bread and found a ready welcome with their fellow-clansmen in Rohilkhand. On their way to India they were joined by many Afridi adventurers of the Khaibar region. Thus, by the year 1742, Ali Muhammad commanded a force of thirty to forty thousand Afghāns, besides many others of his countrymen permanently settled on the land in Rohilkhand.

§ 5. *Military value of the Ruhela army; Ruhela character.*

It was a force formidable in number, but it was rendered still more formidable by its military organization and the racial character of the men. As an eye-witness of the campaign against Ali Muhammad in 1745 writes in his diary, "Every

soldier in his army, whether horse or foot, carries a musket; every commander of ten or a hundred infantry has his own small banner of parti-coloured cloth, and these are carried at the head of the cavalcade in marching, so that it looks as if a flower garden is travelling with them." (Anandrām, 261.)

A revolution had taken place in the method of Indian warfare since the beginning of the 18th century. In the wars of Aurangzib's heirs artillery had been the decisive factor. The old tumultuous rush of a horde of Rajput desperadoes or regular charge by the heavy armour-clad Mughal cavalry, which formerly used to sweep away every obstacle from before them, was now a thing of the past; its military value was gone except in very rare and accidental combinations of favourable circumstances. Then musketry made a rapid advance. Nādir Shāh's success showed the irresistible power of mobile musketry, —whether matchlocks in the hands of mounted men or long pieces (swivels) carried on camels. Alivardi Khān's campaigns also demonstrated the value of musketry fire when properly directed. Even swift-rushing infantry, called *barqāndāzes*, firing their pieces and acting in concert, had proved victorious over superior bodies of extremely light cavalry armed with the old sword and lance.

This fact came to dominate the history of India fully in the middle of the 18th century, and it gave a peculiar importance to the Afghān race by reason of their special aptitude for this kind of warfare.

The Afghān soldiers even then displayed the qualities which have distinguished them later in Anglo-Indian warfare.* They were cool, accurate shots, expert in taking every advantage of the ground, clever in executing night attacks and ambuscades, extremely mobile on foot, and yet capable of acting in concert and of controlling their fire at the direction of leaders. Their well-regulated volleys, delivered at the right moment, had an electric effect in shaking their enemies' nerves and deciding battles by one stroke. The Afghan clan-system turned their manhood into naturally disciplined war-bands, acting in cohesion and in submission to a single higher command, without any thought of self. No mercenary or conscript army could match such fighters, as Macaulay has illustrated in the parallel case of the Scottish Highlanders. Their fire-control,

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* Sir Colin Campbell observed in the course of the N. W. Frontier campaign of 1852, "Swarms rushed forward, taking advantage of every accident of ground, which shows that few equal them in individual action in a broken country." (*Life*, i, 278.)

disciplined ardour of fight, and active working of the individual soldier's intelligence were unrivalled in India in that age no less than now.

Above the feud between clan and clan among the Afghans rises the consciousness of the oneness of their race. They have united to oppose a common enemy more often and more effectively than the Rājputs are known in their long history to have done. An appeal to their general racial interest calls forth their co-operation most easily and speedily. They honour their women, and when a chieftain's wife sent her veil round among the tribesmen in an appeal for the defence of her distressed husband or son, no Afghān was so unchivalrous as to shrink from taking up arms on her behalf. In addition, they were simple and hardy and not toned down by luxury like the Persians and Turks settled on the fertile soil of India, or ruined by addiction to drugs like the latter-day Rājputs.

The defect of the Afghān tribal levies was that they were unable to plan and conduct any long campaign and make the arrangements necessary for it. Away from the stricken field they were no better than brigands. Their failure in diplomacy and constructive statesmanship has always prevented them from confirming and extending the gains of their arms. This political

weakness nullified their martial value in the long run. Hence, the Afghāns have always been tough opponents, but never empire-builders.

§ 6. *Natural fortresses in Rohilkhand; Ruhela administration.*

The Afghān settlers in Rohilkhand possessed two local advantages of great value. Their strong places were surrounded by dense bamboo hedges which were impenetrable to cavalry and artillery and through which even infantry could thread its way only where paths had been cut. These bamboo palisades lingered in that region till well after the Sepoy Mutiny of 1857. Then, again, the skirt of the hills in their immediate north, with the thick *sāl* forests and pestilential swamps called *Tarāi*, afforded them a safe refuge after any defeat in the plains, because no enemy could pursue them across these natural obstacles or survive the climate long.

To individuals the Ruhelas, like others of the Afghan race, were not free from cruelty*

* At the end of the futile siege of Allahabad fort by Āhmad Khān Bangash (Jan.-April, 1751), his Āfghān soldiers set fire to the defenceless and unoffending city of Allahabad, from the Khuldābād gate to the foot of the fort and plundered it, carrying away four thousand women of high and well-born families into captivity. Only the *Dāira* of Shaikh Āfzal Allahabadi and *mahalla* Dariābād, whose inhabitants were all Āfghāns, were spared. (*Siyar*, iii. 34.)

vindictiveness and treachery. But as rulers, they saw the unwisdom of killing the goose that laid the golden eggs. They protected the peasants and traders in their lands from unauthorised oppression and were eager to drive away other robbers from their own preserves. In this they formed an honourable contrast to the Marāthās, who extorted their *chauth* and then went away, without recognising any moral obligation to protect the people whom they had robbed or whose regular Government they had overthrown. The Ruhela chieftains left the revenue collection in the hands of Hindu ministers (*diwāns*) and their household accounts and correspondence in charge of Hindu secretaries (*munshis*), who were generally very capable men of business and faithfully devoted to their masters' interests. The result was that both rulers and subjects prospered in their dominions when once the violent act of annexation was over.*

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* George Forster, a civil servant of Madras, who was travelling through Rohilkhand in the disguise of a Georgian merchant, wrote in February 1783 that "the Ruhelas by a salutary system of government had enriched their country and had made their names respected . . . . . had made the country populous and opulent." And, again, "The whole of this chief's [Faizullah Khan's] country evinces the beneficial effects arising from the encouragement of husbandry, and the aid of an active government. Populous villages, skirted by extensive fields of corn, are seen on all sides." [*Journey*, i. 98-99.]

§ 7. *Emperor's expedition against Ali Md. Ruhela.*

Safdar Jang had been appointed Mir Atish in 1744. By virtue of this office he now became the working head of the imperial army, as its nominal Chief, the Mir Bakhshi, was Nizām-ul-mulk, who had been absent far away in the Deccan ever since 1740, leaving his son Ghāzi-ud-din I as his deputy at Court. Safdar Jang planned to win martial fame by conducting an expedition under his own leadership. He used to regard the Afghāns of Rohilkhand as "serpents in his path to Delhi", (Ashub, ii. 426,) and now induced the Emperor to sanction a war for curbing Ali Muhammad Ruhela. The wazir was not consulted, as he was publicly known to be the protector of this Ruhela rebel and even related to him by marriage; but the war once begun, the wazir could not in decency absent himself from the Emperor's side. So, Safdar Jang took the Emperor with him on this expedition as its ostensible head.

The Ruhela campaign of Muhammad Shāh (1745) revealed the utter rottenness at the core of the imperial Government and the worthlessness of its military machine. It was a war waged not against a foreign invader like Nādir Shāh

coming at the head of the veteran victors of a hundred battles, nor even against the organised and hereditary troops of a great feudal baron, but against a petty rebel who had started life as a mere private in a band of mercenaries and was now backed only by the village militia of his own clan.* Yet the full force of the Empire wielded by the Emperor, his Chancellor and Army Chief in person, for three months, achieved only the slightest and least durable result, and that, too, more by persuasion than by compulsion. The moral canker which this failure revealed in the Delhi State is more significant than a hundred defeats in the field. The campaign laid bare to public view the blind selfishness and insane jealousy animating the leaders, and the shameful love of ease and lack of any sense of duty prevailing among all ranks, which have been perpetuated for posterity in Anandrām Mukhlis's graphic diary of the expedition.

We do not know whether to weep or to laugh when we hear the pathetic groaning of this high-placed gourmand at the ordinary privations of a march of 120 miles from Delhi into the Doab, in the midst of the entire armed strength of an empire, with no fighting except an occasional

* "The Emperor was humiliated by reason of his nobles failing to subdue this *tāluqdār* of a few villages." Ānandrām, p. 255.

distant cannonade,—which spoilt his sleep! Other nobles were equally soft and imbecile. Such an empire had already forfeited its right to exist.

This war was under the special charge of Safdar Jang and had been undertaken at his instance and in opposition to the wazir's policy; therefore, from the outset the wazir sulked in isolation in his tents, or enjoyed his rival's troubles and discomfiture. On the second day of the march, Safdar Jang had to "visit the wazir in his camp and crave his pardon, as there had been unpleasantness between the two before." (Anandrām, 206) Later on, when Qāim Khān, the loyal Bangash chief of Farrukhabad, joined the army, the Mir Atish quarrelled with him and the two had to be reconciled in the Emperor's presence. (5th May. Anandrām, 247.)

Muhammad Shah issued from Delhi on 15th February 1745, but immediately afterwards wasted 18 days in its environs, at the garden of Farhat-āfzā at Loni (east of Delhi, across the river.) The terrible summer of the Upper Doab, with its sand-storms, blistering winds, and dried water-sources was approaching, and yet no attempt was made to reach the objective and end the campaign promptly. The actual start was not made till 5th March, and then this army, or rather this

moving city of tents, made its slow and ponderous march, with long and frequent halts, from Loni by way of the Hindan river, Dāsna parganah, Dahāna village (in Hāpur, some 36 miles east of Delhi), Bagsar, Garh Mukteshwar, Sahāranpur and Sambhal, till at last on 14th May, or fully three months after he had left Delhi, the Emperor arrived about eight miles from Bangarh, the enemy's stronghold, which was only 110 miles from Delhi in a straight line over a level plain, with no difficult river between.

The qualities displayed by the army in the face of the enemy were exactly in keeping with this lordly style of marching, as is frequently illustrated by Anandrām's diary :

"3rd May. A violent wind blows all day. Many men of the camp stole away to Delhi under different pretexts." (P. 245.)

"16th May. Qāim Jang rides forth to assault Bangarh, but halts in a grove after passing three miles of the way, returns to the camp four *gharis* before sunset, his armour-clad troopers blistered by the heat and want of water."* (P. 253.)

"18th May. The generals of the imperial army march out a short distance (towards Bangarh) to a plain, halt there, dig wells, raise

* Cf. "The troops in the trenches were so covered with dust as to look like parties of *sannyāsis*. 19 May." P. 256.

batteries, and fire upon Bangarh. But nothing was effected; evidently the nobles did not mean business." (P. 255.)

"20th May. Entrenchments were made about two miles in front (of the imperial camp). There was an exchange of fire with Bangarh. At dusk the nobles fell back on their tents near the trenches." (P. 257.)

§ 8. *Peace made with the Ruhela chief.*

A night attack attempted by the enemy on 20th May was repulsed by the imperial artillery. But the rainy season was expected to begin in a month's time, when the swollen rivers would cut off the food supply of the imperial camp while Bangarh was still untouched. The wazir therefore induced the Emperor to patch up a peace with Ali Muhammad in order to be able to hurry back to his capital. He himself settled the terms as intermediary, presented Ali Muhammad to the Emperor (23rd May), and secured pardon for him. The Ruhela chieftain agreed to surrender his usurped fiefs to a new imperial officer (Farid-ud-din Khān, the son of Shaikh Azmatullah Khān of Murādābād) and to dismantle the fortifications of Bangarh. After a short time he was given a 4-*hazāri mansab* and sent to Sarhind as the imperial faujdar of the place, but two of his sons

were detained at Court as hostages for his fidelity. Anandrām, who saw him at the time of his surrender, describes him as a man of medium height, with a fair complexion, blooming face and open forehead, about forty years old, but looking youthful and dauntlessly brave. (P. 261.)

From this inglorious campaign the Emperor and his army immediately afterwards began a hurried return to Delhi, suffering even worse hardships than in their outward march, from the stormy winds, heavy rain, muddy roads, and swollen rivers. Muhammad Shāh re-entered his capital on 19th June, the return journey having taken 25 days.

§ 9. *Imperial authority overthrown in Rohilkhand.*

Muhammad Khān Bangash, lord of Farrukhābād, died in 1743 and was succeeded by his eldest son Qāim Khan, who was a fine soldier and sportsman, but too much obsessed by religiosity to pursue a career of ambition. Moreover, the Bangash chieftains, unlike the Ruhela leader Ali Muhammad, were fairly loyal servants of the imperial Government and lawful *jāgirdārs* in their barony. Their authority was more recognised, their territories more settled, and their revenue collection more regular than was the case among

the Ruhelas. Hence, Qāim Khan did not trouble the Delhi Court but often helped it loyally, and the Farrukhābād district remained quiet during his life time.

In Rohilkhand proper, Ali Muhammad's usurped authority had been abolished by the terms of the Emperor's pardon to him in May 1745. The *jāgirs* seized by him were ordered to be put in the possession of their rightful owners. This, however, was more easily said than done. True, Ali Muhammad was now removed from the scene of his mischievous activity, detained at Delhi for some months, and finally sent off to Sarhind as its *faujdār*, while his two grown-up sons were held at Court as hostages for his good conduct. But it merely spread anarchy throughout Rohilkhand in the place of one strong usurper's rule. As the author of *Siyar-ul-mutākhkharin*, who was personally present in Barily at this time, noted, "Thousands of Afghāns were living there, and having struck their roots, had become owners of the land and made it impossible for anybody else to govern that tract." (iii. 20.)

Barily and seventeen other *mahals* had been formerly assigned in *jāgir* to the Nizām, but they had long gone out of the grantee's control on account of the Afghān predominance. In 1746 the Nizām's eldest son and agent at Court,

Ghāziuddin Firuz Jang, sent Hedāyet Ali Khān (the father of the author of *Siyar*) there as manager of this estate. But the new collector's task was extremely difficult in view of the smallness of his resources and the vast number and turbulent character of the Afghan population he was expected to control. His position was further complicated by the jealous opposition of an old grantee who was the natural enemy of the Ruhelas.

Shaikh Azmatullah Khān, of the Shaikhzāda family of Lucknow, had acted as imperial *faujdār* of Rohilkhand (with his head-quarters at Murādābād) from Farrukh-siyar's reign till his own death in 1737, and his eldest son Muin-ud-din had acted as magistrate of Barily during part of the time. Ali Muhammad Ruhela, in his obscure youth, had served them as a petty *jamadār* in their personal force. On Azmatullah's death, the governorship of Rohilkhand had gone out of the family to another man, Mir Ahmad Khān, and later on to Ali Muhammad. In 1745, on the downfall of the latter, Azmatullah's second son, Farid-ud-din, had been appointed to this post. His nephew Shaikh Qutb-ud-din (evidently the son of Muin) was living in his mud-fort of Chajlait,*

* *Siyar*, iii. 21, spells the name as *Chachhat*, which I take to be an error. *Imād* 35, places his family home at Amethi (in the Sultanpur district of Oudh.)

13 miles north of Murādābād, in great poverty. His ambition was to recover his family possessions and power, now that the field was left clear by the Ruhela usurper. He, therefore, obstructed Hedāyet Ali on his arrival at Barily; but the latter acted with great tact and combination of force and diplomacy and after laying siege to his little fort won him over. Hedāyet Ali also enlisted the Ruhela headmen of the different villages in his service in order to ensure their help in controlling their clansmen. The chief of such auxiliaries was Pir Ahmad Ruhela (a Pir-zāda of the Afghāns); but he soon turned against his employer, partly because of his Sunni bigotry,—Hedāyet Ali being a Shia. Pir Ahmad's band of 1,700 men soon proved the nucleus of an Afghān army hostile to the new collector of Barily, though in their first encounter Ahmad was defeated.

But the table was turned upon Hedāyet Ali early in 1748. At the first news of Abdāli's capture of Lāhor and intended march upon Delhi, Ali Muhammad Ruhela deserted his post at Sarhind* (middle of February) and with his entire contingent of Afghāns returned to Rohilkhand. At once his clansmen dropped their ploughs, took

* G-i-R., p. 24, tries to explain away this desertion by saying that the Emperor himself sent Ali Muhammad to Katehr as governor in order to prevent his joining Abdali.

up their matchlocks, and joined him in their thousands. With this overwhelming force he swept the district clear of the lawful *jāgirdārs'* officers and re-established his own possession in a month's time, set up his own magistrates again, and crossed the Ganges into the Bijnor and Murādābād districts.

Hedāyet Ali could not maintain himself against a nation in arms. His hired Afghān retainers turned against him and invested him in his house at Barily for their arrears of pay, while Ali Muhammad arrived within 20 miles of that town. He escaped from the difficulty by paying off his troops, abandoning most of his property, and falling back on Delhi (middle of April). By this time the Emperor Muhammad Shāh was dead; the interregnum (as always happened in Mughal India), had let loose the forces of disorder, and Hedāyet Ali had great difficulty in making his retreat in the midst of the lawlessness and highway robbery that were now raging through this tract "worse than ever before." (*Siyar*, iii. 23) Thus the fruits of the Bangarh campaign of 1745 were undone in a month's time in 1748.

CHAPTER III.

Maratha incursions into Bengal Bihar and Orissa up to 1746.

§ 1. *How the Maratha Power spread over the Mughal Empire.*

The decline of the Mughal Empire presented an opportunity by which the Marāthas profited more than any other people of India. Already, before Aurangzib was dead they had arrested the imperial expansion in their home-land and forced the Delhi Government to acknowledge defeat. The successors of that monarch were too weak to make any attempt at recovering their lost suzerainty in the Deccan and had much difficulty even in holding their own. Selfish quarrels among the Delhi nobility, no less than the moral decadence of the later Emperors and their army, hastened the collapse of the imperial authority in the South. When noble fought noble for the *subahdāri* of Gujrāt or the Deccan, whichever side won, the invariable result was to increase the relative strength of the Marāthas. Thus, the Mughal Government failed to derive any benefit from the utter anarchy that devastated the Mahārāshtra country for several years after

Shāhu's return home from captivity (in 1707) and the factious jealousy that raged among the Marātha nobles.

And soon the genius of his *wazir* Bālāji Vishwanāth, the Peshwā, placed Shāhu above his rivals and secured for his Government a practical control over his country and its people. The next Peshwā, Bālāji Rāo's son Bāji Rao I, was an ambitious schemer, a daring soldier, and a most enterprising leader. During his term of office (1720—1740) the Marāthas completely overshadowed the legitimate Government in Gujrāt, Malwa and Bundelkhand, while the Deccan proper was as good as ceded to them. The jealous opposition of his rivals, especially the *Senāpati* Trimbak Rāo Dhābādé and the *Senā Sāhib Subah* Raghuji Bhonslé,—both of the Marātha caste, while the Peshwās were Brāhmans,—retarded the establishment of Bāji Rāo's own supremacy in the administration and the unchallenged imposition of Marātha authority over these *subahs*. But this set-back was temporary. After some fluctuations of fortune and even bloody internecine wars (like the battle of Dābhoi where Dhābādé was killed on 1st April, 1731, and a fight with Raghuji Bhonslé in February, 1739), Bāji Rāo near the end of his life wisely realized the practical limits of his own power and agreed to a scheme for

amicably partitioning the Mughal provinces among the rival Marātha generals as their "spheres of influence," so that each *sardār* would be free to plunder tax and dominate over his special hunting ground without the fear of encroachment or obstruction by any other officer of his master. As a result of this arrangement Gujrāt, Berār and Dhār passed to the Dhābādé the Bhonslé and the Pawār families respectively, while Malwa and Bundelkhand remained the Peshwā's own preserve, with direct access to the Court of Delhi. The plunder of the Madras Karnātak was to be the joint enterprise of several chiefs. Shāhu completed and sanctioned this partition of the Mughal Empire as the best course for the Marātha people as a whole.

Raghuji Bhonslé's ambition of ruling at Satārā as his master's master in the place of the Peshwā having been defeated by Bāji Rāo's superior education and inborn genius for war and organisation, he naturally pursued the path of expansion left open to him in the north-east and east of his domain of Nāgpur, namely by raiding Bengal, Bihār and Orissā across the intervening jungles and hills. And soon he received invitations from domestic enemies of that *subah* on the eastern-most frontier of the Mughal Empire. It was a God-send to Raghuji. His recent Karnātak

venture had brought him no gain owing to too many greedy rivals having entered that field; his raids into the Peshwā's spheres of influence had failed; and he was now sunk over head and ears in debt from his inflated army expenditure. Only one path of relief seemed to be open before him, namely the plunder of Bengal, whose wealth was proverbial throughout India and which had paid no *chauth* to the Marāthas up to now.

§ 2. *Independent governors of Bengal subah.*

At the time of Aurangzib's death (1707), Murshid Quli Khān (surnamed Jafar Khān Nasiri, Nāsir Jang, Mutaman-ul-mulk) was deputy governor (*nāib nāzim*) of Bengal and Orissā, as well as *diwān* or revenue chief of these two provinces. The absence of the governor, Prince Azim-ush-shān, at the imperial Court during the next four years made Murshid Quli the virtual ruler of Bengal. Farrukh-siyar on his accession (1713) made him the substantive governor of Bengal in addition to his diwān-ship. In 1719 the full governorship of Orissā was conferred upon him. [*Siyar,* ii. 8, *Riyāz,* 250-252, 273-276.] Murshid Quli's strong, honest and efficient administration, love of justice, and strict enforcement of peace and order greatly increased the wealth and happiness of the people and fostered the growth

of trade in the country. When he died (30th June, 1727) he was succeeded by his son-in-law Shujā-ud-din Muhammad Khān (surnamed Shujā-ud-daulah, Asad Jang) in the rule of the two provinces, to which Bihār was added by the Emperor about 1733. Shujā also enjoyed a peaceful and prosperous reign.

On the death of Shujā (13th March, 1739), his son, Sarāfrāz Khān (entitled Alā-ud-daulah Haidar Jang) became *subahdār* of Bengal, Bihār and Orissā. But this youthful ruler's excessive licentiousness, which (as so often happens in the East) he indulged in under the cloak of constant devotion to religious practices and resort to the society of theologians, caused a rapid decline in the administration. The evil was aggravated by the new Nawāb's jealous hostility to Alivardi Khān and his elder brother Hāji Ahmad, who had been the ablest and best-equipped officers during the last two reigns. Alivardi, knowing that his life and honour would be attacked by his worthless master whenever he could be caught at a disadvantage, decided to strike the first blow in self-defence. With remarkable skill and courage, he led an expedition from Patna (where he was deputy governor) into Bengal, defeated and slew Sarāfrāz at the battle of Gheriā (10th April 1740), and made himself Nawāb of the three provinces,

afterwards securing the recognition of his act of might from the Emperor by profuse bribery. This act of usurpation opened the flood-gate of trouble on Bengal by encouraging in others the desire to imitate his illegal violence and open defiance of the imperial Government. [*Siyar*, ii. 101—105.]

§ 3. *How Alivardi won and lost Orissa and won it again in 1741.*

Rustam Jang (originally named Murshid Quli), the son-in-law of Shujā and deputy governor of Orissā, was goaded on by his wife Dardāna Begam to avenge her half-brother Sarāfrāz's death. He refused to acknowledge the authority of the successful regicide in Bengal, declared his own independence, and in the ensuing cold weather marched from Katak to Balesar with the object of conquering Bengal. Alivardi advanced from his capital to meet the danger. For some weeks the two armies lay facing each other in their trenches near Balesar, with occasional skirmishes between their patrols. At last, on 3rd March, 1741, a battle was precipitated by Rustam's impetuous son-in-law, Bāqar Ali, who left his impregnable trenches and numerous artillery behind him and attacked Alivardi on the plain of Fulwāri (four miles north of Balesar town),

but was routed after a severe fight. Rustam Jang fled to Masulipatam in a friend's ship then happily lying at anchor off the port. Alivardi occupied Katak and installed his son-in-law Said Ahmad (surnamed Mahām-ud-daulah Saulat Jang) as deputy governor there. [*Siyar*, ii. 107-109.]

But in August, Bāqar Ali, after hiring Marātha helpers from the Karnātak, returned to Orissā, captured Katak by a sudden attack, made its worthless and unpopular governor and his entire family prisoners, and seized the government of the province. Alivardi, in great distress, collected a strong force, marched into Orissā again, defeated Bāqar Ali on the bank of the Mahānadi,* rescued his son-in-law, and drove Bāqar Ali and his Marātha allies into flight to the Deccan (early in December, 1741). [*Siyar*, ii. 111—114; *Riyāz*, 327—338.]

Meantime, in another corner of his dominions his local deputy had sent an expedition to bring the refractory Rājah of the jungly district of Rāmgarh (modern Hazāribāgh) under subjection. The zamindār who was thus antagonised naturally offered no opposition to the Marāthas of Nāgpur

* At a place called *Riāpur* in Bengal letter of 23rd December, 1741 and *Ghāt Choprā* in *Riyāz*, 335. The Nizām's reception of the fugitive Rustam Jang and his family (*Hadiqat-ul-ālam*, ii. 173.)

on their way to invade Bengal through his territory. [*Siyar*, ii. 116.]

§ 4. *First Maratha incursion, 1742.*

After recovering Katak from Bāqar Ali, the Nawāb passed two or three months there restoring the administration and making the necessary arrangements, and then he set out on his return to Bengal. On the way he halted near Balesar to send detachments into the Mayurbhanj country to punish its Rājah for his unfriendly attitude during the recent war. While thus delayed, the Nawāb heard at Jaygarh that Raghuji Bhonslé had sent his prime minister, Bhāskar Rām Kolhatkar, with a strong force to invade Bengal and collect *chauth* from the province. Further on the way, at Mubārak Manzil,* he learnt that the Marāthas

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* Its modern name is *Shāhin-bandi,* in the Ārāmbāgh subdivision of the Hughli district, as proved by Mr. Md. Anzam in the *Prabasi* magazine, (Asharh, 1338, p. 382).

Bhāskar Rāo's force is estimated by Grant Duff (ii. 11) on the basis of Marātha records as 10,000 to 12,000. *Siyar* (ii. 117) gives "25,000, which rumour swelled to 40,000." Chandarnagar factory letter based on rumour gives 80,000!

My history of the Marātha incursions is mainly based upon *Siyar,* ii. 116—190, with some additions from Salimullah's *Tārikh-i-Bangāla* (I.O.L. MS., 2995 used, as F. Gladwin's trans. entitled *Narrative of the Transactions in Bengal* is shorter and gives wrong variants and mistranslations.) Important additions and corrections have been made from the Marathi records (*S.P.D.*) and the English and French factory letters. The contemporary

had already passed through Pachet and entered the Bardwān district. By a forced march of one night and day the Nawāb arrived at Bardwān and encamped outside that town on the bank of the Rāni's tank (15th April, 1742). [*Siyar,* ii. 116-117.]

Early next morning he was astonished to discover that during the preceding night the Marātha light horse had completely encircled his camp. Their march had been so swift and secret that the Nawāb's spies had failed to get any news of their position and line of advance till it was too late.

Alivardi was now in a situation of extreme peril. After his reconquest of Orissā, as he had no enemy in view, he had sent back most of his troops to Murshidābād in advance of himself. At this time he had only 3,000 to 4,000 cavalry and 4,000 to 5,000 foot musketeers with him. The Marātha horde immediately hemmed this small force round and effectually cut off its food supply, without venturing on any pitched battle. The daily skirmishes of his foraging parties with the

sources written by Bengalis are the *Mahārāshtra Purān* by Gangārām (ends with 1744) and the *Chitra-champu* (in 1744) by Vāneshwar. *Riyāz-us-salātin* (340-362) gives some useful details of its own, but more often repeats Salimullah, and is much too brief.

enemy could produce no decision nor clear a way for his escape. A week passed in this way. Bhāskar himself took post at Bardwān with 14 of his captains to continue the investment of the Nawāb's camp, while his other ten captains with their contingents roamed over the country plundering the villages far and wide. The result was that not only could no grain-dealer reach the Bengal camp but all the sources of grain supply around Bardwān were also destroyed. Alivardi at last realised that to remain stationary in his encampment was to court death by starvation.

From Bardwān (north of the Dāmodar river) the old Mughal road proceeds north-east to Katwā, 35 miles off. On this road, 21 miles from Bardwān, is a half way station at Nigun-sarāi, from which Katwā is only 14 miles distant. At Katwā the old course of the Ganges, called Bhāgirathi or the river of Murshidābād and Calcutta, is crossed and the road runs 40 miles northwards to Murshidābād, the capital of Bengal under the later Mughal dynasty. Eleven miles up from Katwā, on the eastern bank of the river stands the village of Palāshi (Plassey), the scene of the historic battle which gave Bengal to the English. The entire country is a dead flat alluvial plain.

§ 5. *Alivardi fights his way to Katwā.*

Alivardi, therefore, decided to make a night march in light equipment with a select force, surprise the Marātha cordon, and cut his way through it. The success of this plan depended entirely on his being able to move with strict secrecy and superior mobility, and he failed in both respects. When he led his army out of his camp, ordering the countless servants and other non-combatants to remain at Bardwān, they feared that the Nawāb was running away with his escort, abandoning them to the mercy of the invaders without any means of defence. Every one in the camp, therefore, pressed close on the detachment and it soon became a noisy, unwieldy and slow-moving body. The projected surprise entirely failed.

In this condition the Bengal column was discovered in the morning and enveloped by the Marātha light horse. By four o'clock in the evening its advance was entirely stopped, and it came to a halt in a muddy rice field. When Alivardi ordered a charge to clear a path in front, the Afghān soldiers who formed the backbone of his army made a mere show of fighting without really engaging the enemy. The reason was that they were discontented with the Nawāb for his not satisfying the greed of their leaders. The

Marātha horse circling round forced the stragglers and rearguard to crowd for safety upon their own centre, abandoning the baggage and tents which were slowly coming up from behind. The enemy seized the opportunity, set fire to the tents, looted the property in the camp, and cut down the stragglers, only a few of whom escaped. The column passed all that afternoon and the following night in the rice-field, without food or shelter and unable either to advance or to retreat.

Alivardi now became a prisoner in deed. In order to gain time for reinforcements to reach him, he opened negotiations with the Marāthas. But Bhāskar knew the strength of his position; he demanded as the price of peace all the Nawāb's elephants in addition to one *kror* of Rupees. Next night Alivardi made an appeal to the generosity of his Afghāns. He went to their tents in utter humility, unaccompanied by a single attendant or torch-bearer and taking his little grandson Sirāj-ud-daulah by the hand, and placed his honour and the lives of both at the feet of their captains. This move won over Mustafa Khān, their leading general. Roused by Mustafa's eloquent and chivalrous speech, the Afghān soldiers vowed to defend their master to the death.

In the morning the Bengal army resumed its march towards Katwā. All its tents, baggage and

provisions had been lost, but the artillery still remained and proved very useful in forcing the Marātha spearmen to keep at a respectful distance. In this way, these men, now greatly reduced in number, cut their way to Nigun-sarāi, where a desperate rear-guard action was fought to check the enemy and Musāhib Khān fell. Next day Katwā was reached. During this march, whenever the Bengal army halted, the pursuing Marāthas used to halt likewise, just beyond the range of the *jizails*, while their roving bands plundered and burnt the villages for ten miles on each side of the road at every stage. Fighting daily on empty stomachs in this manner, the Nawāb and his army reached Katwā with their bare lives. This small town had been previously sacked and burnt by the Marāthas; but the famished Bengal troops were glad to appease their hunger with the half burnt rice that they could rake up among the ashes of the houses. Soon provisions, artillery and fresh troops reached Katwā from Murshidābād, and the Nawāb's army was restored to strength and comfort. [*Siyar*, ii. 117—121.]

§ 6. *Mir Habib, his career and character.*

In the retreat from Bardwān Mir Habib, an officer of the Nawāb, had been captured by the

enemy. This man at once transferred his services to them and proved their most useful ally and the greatest scourge of Bengal. His local knowledge, ability and persistence alone gave to the Marātha invasion of these three eastern provinces its long-drawn relentless and desolating character. Mir Habib was a native of Shiraz in Persia. Emigrating to Hughli he at first earned a scanty living by hawking from house to house such goods as he could get on credit from the merchants of his own country settled at that port. Though an absolutely illiterate man, his ready wit, extreme suavity of speech, and perfect command of the Persian language (which was his mother tongue) soon enabled him to make his way into the highest circle of society. The pedlar discarded his original profession and blossomed forth into the chief confidant and deputy (*nāib*) of Rustam Jang, rising as his master rose in the service of successive Nawābs. When Rustam Jang was appointed governor of Ḍacca, Habib by his attention to details and strict economy effected large savings in the expenditure of the Government flotilla, artillery and military departments. At the same time he enriched his master by unauthorised encroachment on private trade and a predatory incursion into Tipperā, till he was raised to the peerage. During Rustam Jang's governorship

of Orissā, Habib as his agent (*nāib*) ran the entire administration and distinguished himself by ably managing the public business, keeping the zamindars under control, and greatly increasing his master's income. His ability and tireless activity were only equalled by his boundless ambition, implacable enmity to Alivardi Khān, and utter lack of moral scruple or generous sentiment. [*Riyāz*, 299-303.]

§ 7. *Maratha dash upon Murshidabad, May 6, 1742.*

It was now the beginning of May (1742), in which month the heavy rains begin in Bengal and quickly render the roads unfit for passage and the rivers too deep to be forded. Bhāskar, therefore, wanted to retire in haste to Nāgpur through the uplands of Birbhum. But Mir Habib pointed out that the rich and defenceless capital of Bengal would prove an easy prey if the Marāthas made a lightning raid on it during the Nawāb's absence. He took this task on himself, as he know all about the city and his wives and children were living there in charge of his brother.

With 700 well-mounted Marātha horsemen, Mir Habib made a night march from Katwā and reached Dāhāpārā, opposite Murshidabad, in the morning of 6th May, burnt its *bāzār*, and then

crossed over at the ferry of Hājiganj, to the city of Murshidābād, which had no wall around it. The city, denuded of troops, could make no defence, mainly owing to the cowardice of its governor Hāji Ahmad, the elder brother of the Nawāb. The greatest alarm and confusion raged in the capital of Bengal throughout that day and night. Hāji Ahmad fled to the fort, leaving the city to its fate. The Marāthas plundered from the house of Fathchand (surnamed Jagat Seth or the Chief Banker) in the suburbs nearly three *lakhs* of Rupees, and also several other richmen's mansions without the least check, and in the evening recrossed the river to Tirathkonā (west of Murshidābād), where they halted for the night.

But Alivardi had, immediately on hearing of this movement of the Marāthas, hurried up from Katwā on their heels and arrived at his capital in the morning of the 7th. The raiders then beat a hasty retreat to Katwā, after sacking and setting fire to Tirathkonā and the villages around it.

Early in May, after the Nawāb had cleared his capital of the enemy, the Marāthas retired to Katwā and then set out on their return home in order to avoid the monsoon rains of Bengal. But Mir Habib brought them back from the way (Birbhum) with reproaches for their lack of spirit and holding out alluring hopes of plunder. So,

from the month of June, Katwā became their head quarters and Mir Habib their chief adviser and centre of all affairs (*madār-ul-mahām*). The districts west of the Ganges now passed into their hands. "They set up outposts in many places and occupied the country from Rājmahal to Medinipur and Jalesar. All rich and respectable people abandoned their homes and migrated to the eastern side of the Ganges in order to save their family honour." [Salimullah, 120*a*; *Siyar,* ii. 121-122; Eng. *F.R.*]

§ 8. *Marathas capture Hughli fort.*

Hughli was the most important station of the Mughal Government on the west bank of the Ganges in Lower Bengal. Within its jurisdiction lay Calcutta, Chandarnagar and Chinsurā, the chief factories of the English, the French and the Dutch respectively, and all ocean-going trade-vessels in Bengal had to do the necessary official business with it. It was also the seat of the Mughal naval power in West Bengal and the chief centre of foreign commerce to the subjects of the Nawāb. The commandant (*faujdār*) of Hughli at this time was Muhammad Razā who used to pass his nights in drinking deep and making merry with dancing-girls and singers, to the total neglect

of his duties.* Mir Habib had many old friends among the Persian merchants here, their leader being one Abul Hasan. He sent secret emissaries to them, and these traitors formed a conspiracy to deliver the fort up to the enemy. On the appointed night, Mir Habib with 2,000 Marāthas under Shesh Rāo arrived silently outside the fort. According to their plot, Abul Hasan reported to Muhammad Razā, "Your old friend Mir Habib is standing at the gate begging for a private interview with you." The drunken *faujdār* ordered the gate to be opened without making any inquiry or taking the usual precautions. As Habib passed into the gateway, a number of Marāthas suddenly rushed in with him, overpowered the guards, occupied the fort, and made the Nawāb's officers prisoners (early in July).

§ 9. *All West Bengal in Maratha occupation.*

Thus Hughli passed into Marātha possession and Shesh Rāo was installed there as the con-

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* The governor (*hākim*) of the port, acc. to *Siyar*, ii. 122, was Md. Yar Kh. reputed brother of Alivardi, popularly called Mirza Piaré (as we find from Pondicherry letter of 4th April, 1743 N. S.) Chandarnagar factors sent Rs. 4,000 to ransom him from the Marathas. *Riyaz* 344 calls Md. Raza *naib faujdar*. Salimullah 119*b* wrongly writes that Hughli was then under "Md. Raza and Mirza Piaré the *faujdar*." *Maharashtra Puran* wrongly speaks of *Sher Kh.* as *faujdar* of Hughli.

queror's governor. Unlike other Marātha chiefs, he was polite, considerate to others, just, and merciful. His good administration soon won the landholders and even the European traders of these parts over to his side. Mir Habib acted as the diwān of Bengal on behalf of the Marāthas, sent bailiffs to summon the zamindārs to his presence to arrange for the payment of the land revenue to him, and in all matters acted as the supreme agent of the Rājah of Nāgpur.

Mir Habib also took away some pieces of artillery and a sloop mounting guns from Hughli to Katwā, and thus strengthened the invading army of light raiders with two arms which they had hitherto totally lacked and which they could not have dreamt of securing in Bengal but for him.

The Nawāb's rule ceased in West Bengal, but in Upper Bengal, *i.e.*, from Murshidābād northwards and eastwards as well as in East Bengal, his authority was maintained. But even the country east of the Ganges did not always remain safe from Marātha ravage. On Bhāskar's return in June, the main body of his troops halted at Katwā, but small parties roamed about the island of Qāsimbāzār. They once or twice penetrated as far as Palāshi and Dāudpur (seven miles north of Palāshi and 20 miles south of Murshidābād), burnt the villages around and then

returned to Katwā. A bridge built by Mir Habib at Dāinhāt, with boats commandeered from far and near, enabled the raiders to cross easily from one bank to the other. After a month the Ganges became swollen with rain and the Marāthas could no longer cross over to its eastern side.

§ 10. *Atrocities and devastation committed by the Marathas.*

All over the country from which the Nawāb's authority had disappeared, the Marātha hordes committed wanton destruction and unspeakable outrage on the roads and villages.

Utter terror raged throughout Bengal in consequence of their atrocities. The state of the country is thus graphically described in the English factory letters: "The Marāthas are plundering Birbhum (July, 1742) which has put a stop to all business, the merchants and weavers flying wherever they can."

An eye-witness, the Bengali poet Gangārām, thus describes the sufferings of the people: "The *Bargis* began to loot the villages. Every class of men took to flight with their property, ... when suddently the *Bargis* came up and encircled them in the plain. They snatched away gold and silver, rejecting everything else. Of some people they cut off the hand, of some the nose and ears;

some they killed outright. They dragged away the beautiful women, tying their fingers to their necks with ropes. When one *Bargi* had done with a woman, another seized her;* the women shrieked in the agony of ravishment. The *Bargis* after thus committing all sinful acts, set these women free. Then, after looting in the open, the *Bargis* entered the villages. They set fire to the houses, large and small, temples and dwelling-places. After burning the villages they roamed about on all sides plundering. Some victims they tied up with their arms twisted behind them. Some they

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* *Bargi* is a corruption of *Bārgir* (a Persian loan-word in Marāthi), meaning a horseman supplied with his mount and arms by Government, as opposed to a *silāhdār* who was equipped and mounted at his own expense.

The Marātha soldiers were notorious for their practice of gang-rape in invaded territories from a very early time. In 1683 when they invaded the Goa districts under the eyes of their king Shambhuji, they committed this kind of outrage. A contemporary Portuguese account of that war states: "These enemies were so barbarous that when a woman appeared very beautiful (lit., best) to them, five or six of them violated her by lying with that woman alone. Up to now nowhere else in India has such barbarity been seen, nor even among the Kafris (Negroes). For this reason, many women of Margaon . . . threw themselves into pools, where they died of drowning. Others who bravely resisted the lewd intentions of some of the enemy soldiers, were killed with strokes of the broadsword, and of some others the breasts were cut off." (Tr. from Pissurlencar's *Portugueses e Maratas*, ii. 49. There is another Eng. tr. in I. O. L. *Portuguese Records*, Noticias da India, vol. i. part. 2.) *Mis. du Madure*, iii. 270.

flung down and kicked with their shoes. They constantly shouted, 'Give us Rupees, give us Rupees, give us Rupees.' Where they got no Rupee, they filled their victims' nostrils with water or drowned them in tanks. Some were put to death by suffocation. Those who had money, gave it to the *Bargis;* those who had none had to give up their lives. It was only after crossing the Bhāgirathi that people found safety."

Another contemporary, Vāneshwar Vidyālankār, the Court Pandit of the Mahārājah of Bardwān, wrote in November, 1744: "Shāhu Rājah's troops are niggard of pity, slayers of pregnant women and infants, of Brāhmans and the poor, fierce of spirit, expert in robbing the property of every one and in committing every sinful act. They created a local cataclysm and caused the extirpation of the people of the Bengal villages like an (ominous) comet. . . . . In one day they can cross a hundred *yojans.* They slay the unarmed, the poor, women and children. They rob all property and abduct chaste wives. If it comes to a battle, they secretly flee away to some other country. Their main strength lies in their marvellously swift horses. Such was the tumultuous ocean of *Bargi* troops."

The Muslim historians Salimullah and Ghulām Husain Salim confirm this account.

They write, "The *Bargis* cut off the ears, noses and hands of multitudes of people, or killed them with many kinds of torture and suffering,—by gagging their mouths with bags of dust or drowning them. They destroyed the honour of the people" (*i.e.* outraged the women.) The letters from the French factory at Chandarnagar and the English settlement of Calcutta tell the same tale of oppression.

§11. *The Nawāb surprises the Marātha camp at Katwā on 27th September.*

While all this was happening to his subjects, Alivardi at first confined himself to defending his capital by forming a camp outside it, at Amāniganj and Tārakpur, and decided to put off the campaign against the enemy till the coming winter, when the reinforcements called up by him from his deputies in Purniā and Patna would reach him, and the Emperor also, who had been urgently appealed to for help, was expected to cause a diversion from the direction of Upper India. Alivardi distributed ten *lakhs* of Rupees to his troops and replenished their equipment. From Purniā and Patna his deputies reached him accompanied by 5,000 and 12,000 men respectively, before the rainy season was over.

Pressed by Zainuddin Ahmad (the *nāib*

nāzim of Patna), Alivardi wisely changed his plan, and decided to attack the Marāthas before the drying of the roads and the fall of the river-level would restore to the light Deccani horse its natural advantage. Meantime, Bhāskar, secure in the possession of West Bengal, was celebrating* the Durgā pujā, the greatest festival among the Hindus of Bengal, in the most gorgeous style with forced contributions from all the zamindārs. Here the Nawāb surprised him early in the morning of the third day of the ceremony, the Navami, 27th September, 1742.

Katwā stands at the junction of two rivers, the Ganges running from north to south, and a smaller stream called the Ajāy flowing into it from the west. The Nawāb, coming from Murshidābād, would have to cross the Ganges only if he attacked Katwā from the south, and both the rivers if he tried to reach the place from the north and the west. The presence of an armed sloop of the enemy in the Ganges alongside Katwā and the alertness of the Marātha troops on that river-face made it impossible for him to cross the Ganges at that place. He had entrenched the eastern bank of the river facing Katwā and fired for eight days upon the Marātha position across

* At Dāinhāt, according to Gangārām.

with no result. So, he decided on a wide detour by the north and west in order to reach the enemy in secrecy and attack their unprotected western flank by surprise. Some miles above Katwā both banks of the Ganges were in the Nawāb's possession, with no Marātha band in sight. Here the Nawāb built a bridge of large boats across the Ganges at Uddharanpur and transferred his "storm troops," ten thousand picked men, to the north bank of the Ajay.

About a mile above the western or left wing of the Marātha camp the Nawāb had gradually collected a number of smaller boats unsuspected and unopposed by the enemy, by following the cunning device of sending them to creep from the Ganges up the Ajay river one at a time. With these boats a bridge was swiftly and silently completed at midnight by the strenuous exertions of his engineers, and then the Nawāb's troops began to cross over to the Marātha side of the Ajay. A boat in the middle of the structure broke down and sank under the weight of the passing men and beasts, and before the moving troops could be halted 1500 of the Bengal soldiers were drowned. The Nawāb immediately extinguished all his lights and prevented any alarm from reaching the Marātha camp. The damage was repaired in a few hours and the crossing was

resumed. By the earliest streak of dawn some 2,500 of his men had reached the south bank of the Ajay. They waited no longer for the rest of the army to cross over, lest the growing light should reveal their small number to the Marāthas and defeat their attempt. Quickly crossing the intervening mile of ground, the Bengal army charged the Marātha camp with loud shouts. The surprise was complete. The Marāthas fled without waiting to ascertain the strength of the attacking force or strike a blow. "There was little loss on either side", as the English factory letter reports; but the Nawāb's victory was complete, the Marāthas had to leave all their tents, equipment and property behind. In the course of the morning the Nawāb pushed up reinforcements from the other side of the Ajay in boats, and himself arriving on the scene took up the pursuit of the enemy for some distance, and then came back to their deserted camp. [*Siyar*, ii. 124—126; *Maharashtra Puran;* Salimullah 121*a*—122*a*.]

§ 12. *Province cleared of Marathas up to Chilka lake, December, 1742.*

Bhāskar fled by way of Pachet; his scattered detachments also vacated Bardwān, Hughli, Hijli and other places. But the jungle hindered the

Bengal troops in pursuing him. Bhāskar then turned south and moving by way of Chandrakonā raised his head in the Medinipur district, where he looted and burnt Rādhānagar and other large places, making Nārāyangarh his base. Thence he sent a detachment to Katak, which captured that town after defeating and slaying its governor, Shaikh Masum, at Jājpur. On hearing of this development, Alivardi turned aside from Pachet towards Medinipur. The Marāthas immediately retreated towards Balesar. They turned back and attacked the Nawāb when he was four miles from Medinipur, but were routed by him. Thereafter they never again stood up to a fight, but were incessantly pursued and driven back beyond the Chilkā lake into the Deccan (December, 1742.) Bengal and Orissā were thus at last totally freed from the raiders. Then the Nawāb halted at Katak for a few weeks to restore its government, and returned to Murshidābād in triumph about 9th February, 1743.

§ 13. *Oudh army comes to Patna, December, 1742.*

The first Marātha incursion into these provinces was beaten back by the end of December, 1742, but in the meantime an unexpected danger had threatened Bihār, which revealed the utter rottenness of the State of Delhi.

At the first coming of Bhāskar, Alivardi Khan had appealed to the Emperor for help and the Emperor had ordered Safdar Jang, the *subahdār* of Oudh, to go and guard the province of Bihār, and then, if necessary, advance into Bengal. Safdar Jang had left his headquarters at Faizābād with 6,000 Persian cavalry (formerly of Nādir Shāh's army) and 10,000 good Indian soldiers and a powerful artillery. The greatest terror was felt by the people of Bihār from the ferocity and greed of their pretended defenders, as Safdar Jang's troops were quite unruly and committed all sorts of outrages.

After visiting Patna city and viewing its fort (*c.* 7th December, 1742), Safdar Jang encamped at Bānkipur, five miles west of it, and began to act as if he were already the lawful master of the province. On receiving the news of Alivardi's return from Orissā and the report that the Peshwā Bālāji Rāo, was rapidly coming to Bihār to aid Alivardi, Safdar Jang beat a hurried retreat from Patna. Crossing the Ganges at Munir by a bridge of boats (*c.* 15 January, 1743), he re-entered his own province. [*Siyar,* ii. 127-129.]

§ 14. *Second Maratha invasion, 1743.*

In 1743, at Bhāskar's call, Raghuji Bhonslé himself marched with a large army by way of

Rāmgarh towards Katwā (where he arrived at the beginning of March), bent upon exacting the *chauth* of these three provinces which had been promised to Shāhu by the Mughal Emperor and assigned by that Rājah to Raghuji. To counteract it, the Emperor had appealed to the Peshwā Bālāji Rāo, who was the rival and personal enemy of Raghuji, and the Peshwā had agreed (as early as November 1742) to lead an army into Bengal for the purpose of opposing Raghuji.

§ 15. *Peshwa Balaji Rao enters Bihar, February, 1743.*

Early in February 1743, the Peshwā entered Bihār from the south with a strong force, which rumour put at half a *lakh* of men. The news of his coming, though in the guise of an ally, caused the greatest consternation throughout the province. And with good reason. His army was irresistible, and "along his route those who gave him blackmail or costly presents saved their life and property, while those who attempted defence were killed and their houses were given up to plunder." (*Siyar,* ii. 129.) Patna city trembled for its life; the one anxiety of the citizens was to save their families from outrage by sending their women elsewhere across the river. "Not a family of note left in the town," as the English factory reported. Happily, the Peshwā did not come to Patna. From

Benāres Bālāji hastened to Bengal by way of Saseram, Dāudnagar, Tikāri, Gayā, Mānpur, Bihār and Mungir,—causing great loss and disturbance to the towns on the way. Issuing from the hills and jungles on to the plain of Birbhum, he took the road to Murshidābād, while Raghuji occupied the Bardwān district with his camp at Katwā.* Thus, two vast Marātha forces, each

* The Peshwa's route through Bihar and Bengal is thus given in his Diary, [Vad, ii. pp. 242-243, *corrected*] :—1743, *January* 26-30, Allahabad south bank—*Feb.* 4, Vindhyāchal near Mirzāpur—8-10, Rāmpurā near Benares, (Rāmnagar)—13-14, River Durgāvati (near Jahanabad)—15, Saserām—16-17, River Son (crossed near Dāudnagar)—18, River Punpun—23, Gayā—*March* 8-9, River Ganges (? near Mungir)—14, Jamdā in Khargpur hills (22 m. n. e. of Baidyanāth-Deoghar)—15, Gokulā in pargana Lakshmipur—16, Dhanvā in parg. Handuā (25 m. n. of Dumka)—17-18, Sārangpāni (? tappa Sarath or Dumka sub-division)—19, Fathpur (9 m. s. of Dumka)—20, Bhādu (*Baharu*, 10 m. n. of Nagar and 15 m. n. w. of Suri, on n. bank of Mor river)—21, Rangāon Pathrā in Birbhum (prob. Pathardang, 7 m. w. of Suri)—22, Purānā in parg. Loni, Birbhum (prob. Parangāon, 10 m. n. e. of Suri)—23-25, Kālpipurā in Kot Mamaleshwar, Birbhum (*Kālkāpur*, 2 m. s. of Mayureshwar, wh. is 15 m. n. e. of Suri; Rennell reads *Kot Mowlishwar* here)—26, Duhalia in parg. Fathsingh (2 m. s. of Kandi Gopinathpur)—27-30, Chauriāgāchā (4 m. s. of Rāngāmāti, on w. bank of Ganges.) *On 30th March Peshwā visited Alivardi Khan.—April*, 1-2, Basurā (3 m. w. of Palāshi, on w. bank of Ganges, and 13 m. s. of Chauriagacha)—3, Barod in parg. Mokad ?—4, Barhānpur in Bardwan (prob. Udhanpur ferry, 3 m. n. of Katwā)—5-7, Paltiyā, (13 m. w. of Katwā.) *On 7th April Alivardi visited Peshwa in camp.*—9, Dignagar (18 m. n. w. of Bardwan.) *Hence Peshwā marched rapidly alone.*—10-13, Kakshā (15 m. w. of Dignagar)—15, Bāmhani in parg. Vishnupur ?—16, Mājgāon in parg. Pachet

under a first grade chief, were assembled close to each other in Bengal and a collision between them seemed imminent. [*Siyar*, ii. 129-130.]

§ 16. *Interview between Peshwa and Nawab; Raghuji expelled.*

Alivardi, on learning that Bālāji had arrived 20 miles from Murshidabad, sent his *jamadār* Ghulām Mustafa with the Peshwā's envoys, Gangādhar Rāo and Amrit Rāo, to Pilāji Jādav, the commander of the Marātha vanguard. Pilāji came to the Nawāb with these men, exchanged mutual oaths of fidelity and assurance of friendship, and then returned to his chief. The Nawāb, advancing further, encamped at Lawdā (7 miles south of Berhampur Cantonment), from which village Bālāji's camp was only six miles distant.

(prob. *Rajgaon*, 3 m. s. w. of Bānkurā)—17, Sirāpur in Pachet ?—18, Bero in Pachet (*Beroo*, 6 m. s. of Pachet hill)—19, Sākā in Pachet ?—20, Bhāigathā, parg. Chhadrā, Pachet ?—21-24, Hisak in parg. Sikarbhui ?—25, Began Kodār in parg. Pachet (20 m. w. of Purulia and 7 m. e. of Jhalda)—26-27, Barishā, parg. Rāhishā, kingdom of Rajah Naval Shah (prob. *Burgah*, 11 m. n. w. of Jhalda)—28, Bedugarh in Chutia Nagpur (prob. *Rāmgarh*, 26 m. s. s. e. of Hazaribagh)—29, Jinti, in parg. Siri (? river Jainti)—30, Sivā in parg. Bishengarh (prob. *Sila Ichak*, 12 m. w. of Hazaribagh)—*May*, 1, Govindpur? —3, Gori Anantpur (prob. *Joree*, 10 m. s. of Hunterganj, e. bank of Lilajan river)—12, Akbarpur (4 m. e. of Rohtasgarh, on w. bank of Son river)—14, Saserām—15, Jahanabad on Durgāvati river—18, Mughal Sarāi—19, bank of the Ganges—21, Mirzāpur.

Midway between these two places pavilions were set up for the interview.*

On 31st March Bālāji came to the meeting place with Pilāji Jādav, Malhar Holkar and other generals. At the end of the interview the Peshwā was sent back with a present of four elephants, two buffaloes and five horses. It was agreed that the Nawāb would pay Shāhu Rājah the *chauth* for the province besides 22 *lakhs* of Rupees to Bālāji for the expenses of his army, while the Peshwā would effect a final settlement with Raghuji, who would not trouble Bengal in future. Alivardi could not at first provide such a large sum at once, and it was only the Peshwā's threat to march away leaving Bengal to the tender mercies of Raghuji that compelled the Nawāb to make the payment.

Then these two new allies set out together to expel Raghuji. The latter, on hearing of their advance, broke up his camp between Katwā and

* "The Maratha generals demanded the *chauth* of Bengal in Shahu Rajah's name. Bala Rao proposed a conference with the Nawab which was held on 31st March at Plassey, when the Nawab agreed to allow Shahu Rajah the *chauth* and pay Bala Rao 22 *lakhs* of Rupees for the expenses of his army,—he promising to accommodate affairs with Raghuji, who retired to Birbhum." Bengal letter, 13th August, 1743. For Balaji in Bengal, see *Akhbarat*, 25th, 26th, 29th April and 4th, 10th, 11th, 17th, 20th and 28th May, 1743, as tr. by me in *J. B. & O. R. S.*, December, 1931. Also *Siyar*, ii. 131.

Bardwān, and fled to Birbhum. After one or two marches, Bālāji told the Nawāb that the Bengal troopers could not keep pace with the fleet Deccan horse and therefore Raghuji would slip away unless the Peshwā pursued him with his own cavalry alone. This was agreed to, and next day (10th April Bālāji began a rapid march, overtook Raghuji, beat him in a battle, and drove him in flight into the western hills with heavy loss of men and of much of his baggage and camp which were abandoned to plunder. Many officers of the Nāgpur army also came over to the Peshwā.

Alivardi turned back from Dignagar (32 miles south-west of Katwā) and on reaching Katwā (24th April) made it his base. Soon afterwards he received despatches from Bālāji reporting that Raghuji had passed through Mānbhum and taken the road to Sambalpur, after which Bālāji had marched by way of Pachet to Gayā, where he offered the customary oblations to the souls of his dead ancestors and then took the way to Punā.

§ 17. *Condition of the country under Maratha terror.*

This second *Bargi* invasion (March to May, 1743) repeated the misery of the previous year's raid, though in a smaller theatre and for a shorter time. The English merchants of Calcutta write,

"An entire stop was put to (our) business for some time at Calcutta, Qāsimbāzār and Patna." The defensive measures at Calcutta are thus described : "On the Marāthas' return we on 17th March (1743) ordered the batteries to be put in good order and entertained a hundred Baksaris. We raised a militia of the inhabitants on 4th April. The merchants proposed at their own expense to dig a ditch round the town to secure their houses. (The Council) agreed thereto on 29th March and lent them Rs. 25,000 on four persons' security to repay it in three months; which is completed as far as the Great Road that leads from the Fort Gate towards the Lake and is begun to be carried on as far as the extent of the Company's bounds at Govindpur." This was the origin of the famous *Marātha Ditch* of Calcutta. [Bengal letter, 3rd February, 1744.] At Patna the *nāib nāzim,* Zainuddin Ahmad Haibat Jang, constructed a mud wall round the city.

§ 18. *Third Maratha incursion, March, 1744.*

The nine months from June 1743 to February 1744 passed in peace for these three provinces, and then at the beginning of March, 1744, Bhāskar renewed the invasion of Bengal by way of Orissā and Medinipur. He was now in a fierce mood by

reason of his having lost all his booty and camp property in his hurried flight from Katwā (27 Sep. 1742) in his first year's campaign, and his having been expelled bag and baggage from Bengal by Bālāji in the second year (April, 1743). The Peshwā had easily secured 22 *lakhs* of Rupees from the province, while the Bhonslé had hitherto gained not a pice in return for his vast expenditure on the Bengal adventure. Therefore, Bhāskar began his third year's raid with brutal ferocity and the Nāgpur troops ranged through the country like mad dogs.

As the contemporary Gangārām writes: "As soon as Bhaskar arrived again, he summoned all his captains and ordered them, "Draw your swords and kill every man and woman that you see." When the commander spoke thus, they plundered and slew on every side with shouts of *kill*! *kill*!! Brahmans, Vaishnavs, Sannyāsis, women and cows were slaughtered by hundreds." The universal outrage committed on women by the raiders as reported by this observer has been mentioned already.

In their attempt to escape from such rape and slaughter, the fugitive population had to undergo unspeakable privations.

§ 19. *Alivardi deceived by the Peshwa—his helplessness.*

Alivardi was utterly bewildered by this revival of the Marātha menace. Only a year ago he had paid a huge subsidy to Bālāji on condition that the Peshwā would effect an enduring settlement with Raghuji and insure Bengal against all risk of *Bargi* raids in future. Bālāji had, no doubt, driven Raghuji out of the province for the occasion (April 1743), but next year these human locusts reappeared in their myriads as before.

The reason was that in the meantime these two Marātha chiefs had met together at their king's Court and Shāhu had imposed upon them a compromise, dated 31 August, 1743, by which the four *subahs* of Malwa Agra Ajmir and Allahabad as well as the two estates of Tikāri and Bhojpur (inclusive of Dāudnagar) in *subah* Bihār, *i.e.*, the tract lying west of Patna and east of Allahabad and yielding 12 lakhs of Rupees a year, were assigned to the Peshwā, while Raghuji was to enjoy the two *subahs* of Bengal (including Orissā) and Oudh in their entirety and all Bihār except the *mahals* yielding 12 lakhs reserved for the Peshwā; and each was strictly forbidden to interfere with the other's share. [*Aitihāsik Patravyavahār*, ii. 35 and 36.]

This meant in effect that the province was merely partitioned between these two Marātha leaders as their respective spheres of influence; each of them simply contracted not to encroach on the other's special hunting ground, but was left free to do what he liked in his own part of the *subah*, without any moral or legal responsibility to protect the payer of the blackmail in the other parts of his dominion.

The Nawāb found that in return for all his expenditure he had now got not an assured protector, but only two blood-suckers instead of one. The Peshwā's breach of his promise and callous desertion of the Nawāb's cause threw Alivardi into an agony of despair and rage. Smarting under the 'Punic bad faith' of the Marātha race, he decided to use the same weapon to free his people from their intolerable tyranny. His own situation was well nigh desperate. The two successive years' invasions had more than half dried up his revenue, and at the same time his coffers had been exhausted by the heavy tribute that he had to pay to the Emperor on his accession,* the subsidy exacted

* Alivardi had paid the Emperor 40 *lakhs* of Rupees on account of the property of the deceased Sarafraz Khan and 40 *lakhs* as his own *peshkash*, in addition to the annual surplus of the revenue of the three provinces (which was one *kror* of Rupees acc. to *Siyar*, 107). He also presented, at his accession, 3 *lakhs* to the imperial *wazir* and one *lakh* to the Nizam, besides smaller sums to other nobles (*Riyaz*, 325; *Siyar*, ii. 107).

by Bālāji in 1743, the pay and bounty of the vastly increased army that he had now to maintain for the defence of the province, and the cost of the munitions and equipment consumed in the war. His Government was bankrupt. His soldiers were worn out by the fatigue of campaigning every year. He himself was in poor health and unable to march out at their head. Therefore, a new campaign against the elusive Marāthas in the fierce summer just then commencing, had to be avoided by all means.

§ 20. *Alivardi massacres the Maratha generals at an interview.*

The Nawāb took counsel with his leading Afghān general, Ghulām Mustafa Khān, who undertook to bring Bhāskar and his chief officers to a friendly interview and there massacre them, if he was promised the governorship of Bihar as his reward for the deed. Alivardi agreed, and the plan was matured in strict secrecy. Under Bhāskar there had come this year twenty Marātha generals and two Muhammadans, namely Shahāmat Khān and Alibhāi Qarāwwal. Alivardi sent Rājah Jānakirām (his *diwān*) and Mustafa Khān to Bhāskar's camp at Dignagar. The two envoys declared that the Nawāb was anxious to end these disputes by paying an annual *chauth* that may be

fixed by mutual agreement and that for such a settlement a personal discussion between the two chiefs was necessary. Jānakirām and Mustafa took the most solemn oaths possible for a Hindu and a Muslim respectively that no treachery would be done to Bhāskar's party if they visited the Nawāb. Then Bhāskar agreed to come and an auspicious day (the second day of the Bengali new-year, 31st March, 1744) was fixed for the interview.

The place selected for the meeting was the plain of Mankarā, four miles south of the modern Berhampur Cantonment station. By way of Katwā and Palāshi, Bhāskar reached Mankarā on 31st March. Portions of his army remained behind at Katwā and Palāshi (18 miles south of Mankarā.

Bhāskar advanced on foot to the big tent of interview and was welcomed at its door by Jānakirām and Mustafa Khān. With him were 21 generals, the only absentee being Raghuji Gāikwād, who had always suspected Alivardi of treachery and on this day had stayed behind on the plea of illness. Besides these, there were some twenty other attendants of lower rank. The party began to walk up the carpeted floor of the tent towards the far end of it where the Nawāb was sitting on a dais with his officers. They had barely

crossed one-fourth of the way, when the Nawāb, after satisfying himself that Bhāskar had really come, cried out, "Kill these wretched misbelievers." Then the Nawāb's soldiers rushed out of their places of hiding in the wings, hemmed the Marātha visitors round and after some exchange of blows cut all of them down.

As soon as the massacre began, the Nawāb got out of the tent by the back door, joined his men behind it, and ordered a charge on the Marātha general's escort. These leaderless men fled without making a stand anywhere. Raghuji Gāikwād, the sole survivor of the massacre, had galloped away with his contingent at the first tumult, reached the camps at Palāshi and Katwā, and quickly set off for his home with the troops present there and as much property and baggage as could be loaded quickly. Their roving bands fled to Nāgpur from every part of these provinces. Bengal and Orissā were thus cleared of the enemy at one blow. The Nawāb distributed a bounty of ten *lakhs* of Rupees to his troops. The Emperor, at his recommendation, conferred promotions and titles on all the officers of the Bengal army.*

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* *Siyar*, ii. 134-136, *Riyaz*, 350-352. Letter from Chandarnagar to Pondichery, 12th May (N. S.), Calcutta letter to Company, 3rd August.

The three eastern provinces enjoyed peace and happiness for fifteen months after the death of Bhāskar. The Rājah of Nāgpur was in no position to avenge the murder of his generals immediately. His money difficulties had grown worse by now, and his old friction with the Peshwā had recurred in many a quarter in violation of the compromise effected in 1743, because even after that agreement each was trying to encroach on the other's special sphere. As a financial speculation the three campaigns in Bengal from 1742 to 1744 had brought no gain to the Nāgpur Government. The result was a respite enjoyed by Bengal for more than a year after March 1744.

§ 21. *Nawāb's money difficulties and exactions.*

For the time being the Marātha menace had been dispelled, but the Nawāb's Government was at its wits' end for money. The three annual raids had caused an enormous loss of wealth and shrinkage of revenue. As the Peshwā's agent at the Court of the Nawāb told him in December 1746, "Raghuji, after coming to your country has plundered and destroyed ten times the value of the *chauth* of the province." At the same time, the Nawāb had to increase his defensive force to an immense extent; and his army bill alone amounted to one *kror* and eighty *lakhs* of Rupees

a year. The result was that bankruptcy stared him in the face and he was driven to raise money by every means fair or foul.

In 1743 he had levied a war tax of Rs. 2,000 from each of the three European nations trading in his dominions, but it was a mere drop in the ocean of his need. Early in July 1744 he made "a very extraordinary demand" on the English chief of the Qāsimbāzār factory, "setting forth that the English carried on the trade of the whole world; (they formerly) used to have but four or five ships, but now brought 40 or 50 sails, which belonged not to the Company; that for five years he had done them daily service, but they had him not in remembrance, (and now) that he was engaged in defending the country against the Marāthas, instead of assisting (him) they had supplied the enemy with powder and ball. He therefore ordered them to refrain (from) doing any business at any place, unless (they) supplied him with two months' pay for his troops, amounting to about three millions of Rupees." Three days afterwards (10th July) the Nawāb set *peons* on the European merchants at Murshidābād and issued orders to all parts of the country to stop trading by the Europeans.

From the Bengal letter of 8th November 1744 we learn: "Horse and foot were gone to

impede business at the *garā ārangs* (*i.e.*, factories of coarse cotton cloth). The Nawāb went on seizing and whipping every person. Preet Cotmah was tortured till he agreed to pay Rs. 1,35,000, and (was then) delivered to another tormentor to make him agree to three *lakhs*. The (English Company's) *wakils* were kept two days at the *darbar* without eating." . . . . After a time the Nawāb referred the affair (of the English Company) to Chain Rāi and Fathchand (Jagat Seth), who said, "The Nawāb does not expect this sum (namely, 30 *lakhs*) from the Company, but expects that they raise it among the merchants under their protection and from the number of rich persons (who have) fled to Calcutta during (these) troubles." (They added) "that the Nawāb, to pay his troops, had spent the revenues of the province, his own wealth, and was forced to take money from his relations and servants, and therefore thought it highly reasonable (that) the inhabitants of Calcutta should pay a share. The military officers were impatient and daily importuned the Nawāb to give (them) orders to fall on the English and the *ārangs*."

The English Company, in order to reopen their business in Bengal, Bihār and Orissā, were at last (Oct. 1744) glad to beat the Nawāb down to Rs. three and a half *lakhs*, besides which they

had to pay Rs. 30,500 to his generals and officers in Murshidābād, Rs. 8,000 at Patna, and Rs. 5,000 at Dāccā. [Bengal letter, 9 February, 1745.]

The French at Chandarnagar suffered equally, considering the small value of their trade in comparison with that of the English. In December the Chandarnagar Council was faced with the Nawāb's demand for one *lakh* of Rupees, and had ultimately to pay Rs. 45,000 under the name of a loan. So, the Superior Council of Pondichery issued absolute orders to levy from the inhabitants of the French villages in Bengal a tax which was estimated to yield Rs. 25,000. We thus see that the pressure in the last resort was passed on to the helpless Indian peasant, as is always the case.

§ 22. *Afghan general Mustafa Khān quarrels with Alivardi, 1745.*

A year of peace followed the extermination of Bhāskar Rāo and other Marātha generals, and then in 1745 a domestic revolution turned Alivardi's strongest allies into his bitterest enemies and the divided and weak condition of the province resulting from this internal dissension lured the Marāthas to renew their raids with a prospect of easy success which would have been otherwise impossible. Bengal has no indigenous race capable of the long continued exertion, the

ready submission to discipline, the concerted action in large bodies, and the cool and steady fighting that are required in resisting the hardier races of invaders coming from the south or the west. War, as distinct from the mere guarding of palaces or convoys and the police protection of revenue-collectors and custom-officers, had not been the profession of any class of its people since the imposition of Mughal peace two centuries ago. Therefore, the army of the Nawābs of Bengal, Bihār and Orissā, after they had become independent of the central Government at Delhi, was filled entirely with Afghāns (both infantry and cavalry) and Hindu foot-musketeers of Baksar, with a sprinkling of Sayyids of Barha and other foreign settlers in Upper India and *Bahelia* musketeers from Oudh. Of these the Afghāns were by far the most numerous and efficient element. Their proud consciousness of superiority, inborn martial habits, and strong clannish cohesion made them quite irresistible if they could be only united under one great leader.

Hitherto the Nawāb's right-hand man had been Ghulām Mustafa Khān, the foremost of his Afghān officers. Mustafa's personal achievement in defeating the first year's Marātha raid and his successful *coup* in destroying Bhāskar in the third year, had raised him almost to a position of

equality with Alivardi. His reputation as a brave man and veteran general was deservedly unrivalled, and he had gathered in his own command a compact body of 9,000 Afghān horsemen besides a force of infantry. His armed strength, capacity and ambition made him a formidable danger to the Nawāb's throne.

Alivardi in his hour of sore need had lightly promised him the governorship of Bihār as his reward if he could murder Bhāskar; but he now shrank from the fulfilment of his promise and tried to placate Mustafa by deferring a decision and sending him only smooth messages. Mustafa was justly angry at this breach of faith. His tone became haughtier and more insistent as his heart grew sick with hope deferred, till an armed conflict between him and the Nawāb seemed imminent. He came to fear the fate of Bhāskar if he attended the Nawāb's Court, and therefore he kept to his own house surrounded by his retainers. Alivardi, on his part, called up the loyal troops from all sides and guarded his palace and the mansions of his relatives in full force against any sudden assault by Mustafa's army.

But some other Afghān generals, like Shamshir Khān and Sardār Khān, and even a few of the lieutenants of Mustafa, were won over by Alivardi's gold and favours, and Mustafa on

seeing the forces gathering under the Nawāb at Murshidābād, shrank from delivering an attack on him. He resigned the Nawāb's service and demanded the due salary of his troops, amounting to 17 *lakhs* of Rupees, which the Nawāb paid at once without holding any muster or examination of accounts, and thus promptly got rid of the menace to his throne and capital (February, 1745). The discontented general set off for Patna, determined to wrest the throne of Bihār from Alivardi's deputy Zain-ud-din Ahmad Haibat Jang. On the way he forcibly took away some guns and elephants of the Government from Rājmahal, stormed the fort of Mungir, and appeared before Patna (March 14, 1745) in open rebellion. If Alivardi could seize the throne of the three provinces from the lawful *subahdār,* Sarāfrāz Khān, why should not he (Mustafa) do the same from Alivardi? He too held a conquering sword in his hand, which was the best of imperial *sanads* in that age, as he openly said, in reply to a conciliatory message sent by Zain-ud-din. [*Siyar,* ii. 141.]

§ 23. *Mustafa Khān assaults Patna city.*

Zain-ud-din was warned by Alivardi of the coming danger and urged to save himself by fleeing to Murshidābād by the northern side of

the Ganges, so as to avoid Mustafa's route. He chose the manlier part of defending the province in his charge. Hurrying back to his capital from Tirhut, he rapidly organised a most efficient plan for guarding Patna. Calling up his detachments from the outposts and all local nobles and loyal zamindārs to his side, he soon assembled about 14,000 fighters round him. His armed camp in Jafar Khān's garden, east of Patna City, was surrounded on the land side by a ring of wooden towers (*sangar*) for musketeers, and these were joined together by curtains and continued up to the embankment for keeping out the flood from the marsh south-west of the city (called *jallā*). A deep wet ditch was dug outside this line of defence and the earth thus excavated was thrown up in the form of a rampart outside the mud and water. On the bastions guns were mounted, and sections of the walls were distributed among the different captains.

By the middle of March, Mustafa Khan's force had swollen to 14,000 troopers, partly his own retainers and partly adventurers who had gathered round him in search of employment. With him were about 50 pieces of artillery and 150 elephants; but his Afghāns made little use of cannon, though they carried firelocks to the field and used them on suitable occasions. Their

horses were the best available in India, the cheapest of them having cost not less than four to five hundred Rupees. Their gorgeous saddle and accoutrement and gilded armour made a splendid show.

Arriving before Patna about two hours after dawn on March 14, 1745, Mustafa Khān halted in the numerous mango-groves south of the city. Forming his men in two divisions, each six to seven thousand strong, he sent one of them under Buland Kḥān Ruhela to turn the rear of the defences, while he himself led the other against the last stockade which was held by the Rājah of Tikāri and other zamindārs. The local levies broke and fled at the first charge of these compact bodies of seasoned warriors, and the Nawāb's officers who made a stand found themselves unsupported except by a handful of personal friends. The field was quickly swept clear up to the position where Zainuddin himself stood thinly guarded.

Mustafa now pushed close up to him, and the Afghān's victory seemed certain, when a musket shot killed Mustafa's elephant driver, which induced that general to jump down from its back lest the uncontrollable beast should stampede to his rear and his followers interpret the movement as their general's flight. But his action in dismounting produced exactly the effect that he

wanted to avoid; his men concluded that he had been shot off his elephant like his *māhut* a few minutes before; they broke and fled, and Patna was saved.

For five days and nights after, the two armies stood facing each other in their respective positions, merely exchanging fruitless gunfire. At last Mustafa realised that he was powerless to storm the city and camp, and began his retreat on the 21st. Zainuddin could not at first credit the news that such a great threat had passed away so easily; hence, there was no effective pursuit of the enemy. By way of Mithāpur, Naubatpur, and Muhib-Alipur the baffled Afghān general retired south-westwards to the Son river. Soon afterwards Alivardi arrived at Patna and joined in the pursuit. Mustafa was now quickly expelled from Bihar and chased as far as Zamānia (opposite Ghazipur). The rebel took refuge in the village at the foot of Chunār fort, which belonged to the *subah* of Oudh, and Alivardi and Zainuddin returned to their respective capitals in April [*Siyar,* ii. 137—146.]

§ 24. *Fall of Mustafa Khan.*

Meantime, Raghuji Bhonslé, at the invitation of Mustafa, had invaded the province, which hastened the return of Alivardi to Bengal and detained him there. This news encouraged

Mustafa to come out of Chunār, just before the arrival of the monsoon rains which would make campaigning impossible for the imperialists and give him time to enrich himself by plunder. He entered the Shāhābād district and reached the zamindāri of Udwant Singh Ujjainiā, the owner of Jagadispur, who had long been hostile to the governor of Bihār.

On hearing of this development, Zainuddin promptly issued from Patna at the head of 13,000 men, forded the Son river at Koilwar, and next day advanced 12 miles south-west by south to Karhani on the edge of the jungle of Jagadispur. Two miles beyond this village the enemy were sighted and the battle joined (June 20, 1745). Mustafa's forces and equipment had been greatly depleted by his lack of money, as his Patna adventure had ended in failure and he had exhausted all his treasure. But he charged desperately. Nothing could stop him; the Nawāb's vanguard was put to flight; but just then Mustafa was shot dead by a musket-ball. A servant of the Nawāb mounted the rebel's elephant, cut off his head, and exposed it on the point of a spear. At the sight of it the Afghān army broke and fled to the village of Magror under the leadership of Mustafa's son, Murtaza, and other surviving officers. Thus one great danger passed away from the Nawāb

and he was free to deal effectively with another which had assailed him at the same time. This was the fourth incursion of the Bargis.* [*Siyar*, ii. 146—148.]

§ 25. *Fourth Maratha invasion.*

When Mustafa left Murshidābād in open mutiny (*c.* February 20, 1745), he wrote to Raghuji informing him of his intended invasion of Bihar and inviting him to co-operate in humbling Alivardi by repeating the Marātha raid. The opportunity was as tempting to Raghuji as it was unexpected. He immediately marched at the head of 14,000 horse to Orissā (March) and

* *Mithapur*, the site of the Patna Junction Railway Station. *Naubatpur* is 13 miles s. w. of it. *Muhib-Ali-pur*, on the east bank of the Son, is 19 miles s. w. of Naubatpur and three miles s. of Mussowrah. *Koilwar* is 8 miles e. and *Jagadispur* is 18 miles s. w. of Arrah town. *Karhani* (spelt as *Khurownee* in *Indian Atlas*, sheet 103, and as *Gurranee* and *Gurrahny* in *Rennell's Bengal Atlas*, sheets 9 and 3) is 5 m. south of Arrah and 15 m. due east of Jagadispur. *Arwal* is 8 miles s. of Muhib-Alipur.

For *Magror* the printed text of *Siyar*, ii. 148, reads *Makri-Khu*, which is described as close to the Saseram and Chainpur zamindaris and enclosed by hill passes, (ii. 151.)

There is a *Mugror*, 22 miles west of Bhabhua subdivisional town and 14 miles w. of Chainpur, and a *Kheyra* 3 miles north of Mugror. Both these places are on the banks of the Karamnasa river, in the Mirzapur district of the modern U. P. and only a few miles beyond the present south-western frontier of Bihar. (*Indian Atlas*, sheet 103). *Makri-Khu* of *Siyar* should be corrected into *Magror-Khera*.

captured the city of Katak without a blow. Its governor, Rājah Durlabhrām, the son of the Nawāb's *diwān* Jānakirām, was a timid priest-led sluggard, and his forces were quite inadequate for resistance, while the Nawāb's absence in full strength in Bihār for fighting Mustafa removed all hope of succour coming from him to Katak. After shutting himself up in Barābāti, the fort of Katak, for a fortnight, Durlabhrām was so ill-advised as to pay a visit to Raghuji in his camp, where he and his party were all made prisoners. Durlabhrām was kept in captivity at Nāgpur, and it was only after paying three *lakhs* of Rupees that Janakiram could secure his son's release nearly two years later (January, 1747). The fort of Katak, however, held out under the gallant Abdul Aziz and a garrison of only 400 men. But outside its walls all Orissā up to Medinipur passed into the hands of the Marāthas (April). Even Abdul Aziz at last surrendered the fort on condition of being paid his arrears of salary.

Alivardi, with Mustafa still threatening Bihār, was then in no position to undertake a campaign in Orissā. He, therefore, deemed it politic to temporise by sending envoys to Raghuji to negotiate for peace. Raghuji knew his strength and demanded three *krors* of Rupees. Alivardi prolonged the discussions for two months and a

half, till at the end of June he heard of the death of Mustafa, when he broke off negotiations. On hearing of Durlabhrām's captivity, Alivardi had sent one of his Pathans to Raghuji to negotiate for his release. Raghuji despatched Nilopant as his envoy to the Nawab. While this Pathan was in Raghuji's camp, the Marathas brought in 200 men as prisoners and cut off their noses and ears. Alivardi, angry at this act of atrocity when negotiations were going on, at first ordered Nilopant to be put to death by way of reprisal, but was induced to release him as he had been given a pledge of safety. Thus the peace was ruptured. [*S. P. D.*, xxvii. 11.]

In June Raghuji entered the Bardwān district from Orissā, and seized seven lakhs of revenue. Immediately afterwards there was a great confusion throughout West Bengal and "it prevented business from going on at several *ārangs*." But a month later the raiders vacated the district and removed to Birbhum to canton for the rains (July.) Mustafa was now dead, and Alivardi was guarding Murshidābād in full strength. [*Siyar*, ii. 149—150, *S. P. D.*, xxvii. 11.]

§ 26. *Raghuji invades Bihar; fight with Alivardi.*

After passing a month in cantonments, Raghuji went to S. Bihār for five weeks (August-

September.) In response to repeated appeals from the remnant of Mustafa's army, which was blockaded by the loyal zamindārs at Magror, and its promise to join his banners, he had marched into Bihār. By way of the jungles of north Birbhum and the Khargpur hills (south of Mungir), he arrived near Fatuā which he pillaged and burnt, and then turned south-west, plundering Shaikhpurā and many villages in the Tikāri zamindāri, till he struck the Son river.

After fording it, he advanced to Magror, rescued the Afghāns and their property, and by this junction of forces gathered round himself an army of 14,000 men consisting of swift tireless Marātha light horse (10,000) and redoubtable Afghān fighters (2,000 men under Mustafa Khān's son Murtaza and 2,000 troops of Pathān zamindars.) Next passing into Bhojpur (the Arrah district in West Bihār) he laid a contribution of one *lakh* on its Rājah, a portion of which was paid down and the balance was being arranged for when news came of the Nawāb's arrival at Patna. The Bhojpur chief immediately stopped further payment. Raghuji and his allies recrossed the Son at Arwāl and moved north towards Patna, when they sighted the enemy two marches from that capital. [*S. P. D.*, xxvii 7; *Siyar*, ii. 151.]

In the meantime, Alivardi had set out from his capital immediately after hearing of Raghuji's move towards Bihār. With 12,000 picked troops he hastened to Patna; but finding that city no longer in danger and the enemy gone away to the south, he halted for a few days at Bānkipur, to refresh his troops and replenish his material. Then he resumed his march in regular order with a fully appointed army and powerful artillery, *via* Naubatpur, to overtake the Marāthas. But the enemy kept moving in front of him, always out of gunshot, and plundering the villages along their route, till the Rāni's Tank near Muhib-Ali-pur was reached, where Raghuji had his camp. Here the Nawāb's vanguard under Mir Jafar surprised the Marātha Rājah, who was soon surrounded by the rest of the Nawāb's forces. The other divisions of the Marātha army fought hard to rescue their master, who ultimately escaped through the sector of Shamshir Khān in consequence of that Afghān general's slackness or, more probably, his acceptance of a bribe. Meantime, Alivardi had come up by forced marches and now joined in the chase of the Marāthas. It was during this week's fighting that a spent bullet knocked out a tooth of Raghuji and two of his officers, Mahimāji Bābā and Shankarāji Bābā, were killed by cannon balls

on November 14 and 20. [*S. P. D.*, xx. 74, xxvii. 11; *Siyar*, ii. 151-152.]

In the rapidity of his march the Nawāb had far out-stripped his baggage and tents, and this brought him to a halt for some days. His Begam—he had only one wife throughout his life—sent envoys on her own initiative to make peace with Raghuji in order to give repose to her war-weary lord. Raghuji would have gladly accepted the offer, but Mir Habib advised him to make a dash upon Murshidābād and loot the capital of Bengal which was without the means of defence during the absence of the Nawāb and his army. From the bank of the Son, the Marāthas doubled back towards Bengal, Alivardi hurrying at their heels and his army suffering terrible privations from scarcity of food.* By way of Munir and Patna he turned towards Bengal. At Bhāgalpur, on the deep stream of Champānagar, Raghuji at the head of 6,000 men turned back and surprised

* "From Patna the Nawab made two marches towards Raghuji's position. During the two months that Raghuji was staying in this province, he did not spare a single village in the whole country, so that no provision could reach the Nawab's army. Owing to his encircling the Nawab day and night, the country is disturbed, the Nawab's provision supply has been cut off and grain sells at Rs. 2 a *seer* in his camp. So, he has marched back to Patna, followed by Raghuji." [Marathi newsletter of 27 Dec. 1745, in *S.P.D.*, xxvii. 7.] *Siyar* (ii. 153) supports this.

Alivardi, whose escort was only 600; but by severe fighting the Nawāb gained time for the rest of his army to come up and drive the Marāthas away.

§ 27. *Marathas in Bengal.*

The Marātha Rājah, by following the jungle path, arrived near Murshidābād on 21st December, one day before Alivardi, who had marched by the regular military road. During that one day the Marāthas burnt the suburbs across the river opposite Murshidābād and many of the villages around, such as Jhapāidah and the garden of Mir Jafar. Raghuji remained in the south-west of the city for three or four days, but on Alivardi's advancing, he fell back on Katwā. At the Rāni's Tank, west of Katwā, a severe battle was fought, in which the Marāthas were defeated and driven back with heavy loss, their rear-guard was cut off and half their baggage plundered. Raghuji himself then went back to Nāgpur, leaving Mir Habib with 2 to 3 thousand Marāthas and 4 thousand Afghāns to continue the raid. [*S. P. D.*, xxvii. 11; *Siyar*, ii. 153.] The Nawāb and his soldiers alike were worn out by their two hard campaigns in Bihār in the course of nine months, and had therefore to halt at Murshidābād to recuperate. No effective action could be taken against the Marāthas who maintained their camp

at Katwā, while their detachments roamed all over West Bengal, and even threatened Murshidābād.

At the beginning of March 1746, the Nawāb sent a strong force under Atāullah Khān to Bardwān, who drove the Marāthas out of the district, in consequence of which Qāsimbāzār island was freed from their menace. The Nawāb himself went to Bardwān, but the enemy having been expelled from Bengal, he returned to his capital in April. Thus Bihār and Bengal enjoyed peace for a time, but Orissā remained entirely in Marātha possession. Mir Habib continued at Medinipur the whole season, and looted Hijli at the mouth of the Ganges and its neighbourhood; and in June his troops were encamped about Faltā, where, as the French factors remark, "Alivardi appears to leave him to enjoy the Nawābship of Katak in tranquillity." In fact, the Nawāb put off the reconquest of Orissā till the next cold weather, and utilised his enforced leisure at Murshidābād during the second and third quarters of 1746 in celebrating the marriage of his grandson and chosen heir, Sirājuddaulah, with the most lavish pomp. [*Siyar*, ii. 154.]

§ 28. *Second Afghan mutiny, 1746.*

During the rainy season of 1746, Marātha roving bands interrupted the coming of grain to

Murshidābād by the northern route. The Nawāb ascribed it to the negligence or treacherous collusion of the two Afghān generals whom he had posted to guard the roads. Their slackness in the fight with Raghuji on the Son river in November 1745 had shown how false and unreliable servants they were, and now they were said to have formed a secret alliance with Raghuji for overthrowing Alivardi and sharing the three *subahs* with the Marātha Rājah. So, in June 1746 the Nawāb dismissed Shamshir Khān and Sardār Khān, his highest Afghān generals after Mustafa, with their six thousand men and ordered them to return to their homes in the Dārbhangā district of North Bihār. They refused to go away before their due salaries were fully paid. When the Nawāb sent a serjeant-at-the-mace (*chobdār*) to tell them to wait for some time for the money, they ill treated this messenger. After some skirmishes they were forcibly ejected, but they next encamped at Sakrigali (the gateway between Bengal and Bihār), insisting on being paid. Finally they retired to Dārbhangā, but were destined to create a revolution in Patna a year and a half afterwards. [*Siyar*, ii. 154, 156.]

CHAPTER IV.

THE EASTERN PROVINCES, 1746-1756.

§ 1. *Emperor promises chauth to the Marāthas.*

The second and third quarters of the year 1746 passed in comparative tranquillity for Bengal and Bihār. In October, after the rains had ceased, active operations were renewed for the recovery of Orissā. But at this time the Nawāb was thrown into great perplexity. Early in November he received a letter from the Emperor Muhammad Shāh announcing that he had agreed to make peace with the Marāthas by promising to Rājah Shāhu 25 *lakhs* of Rupees as the *chauth* of Bengal and ten *lakhs* as that of Bihār. These amounts were to be annually transmitted by the *subahdār* from Bengal to Delhi and there handed over to the agents of the Marātha king. People hoped that such a permanent arrangement would save the province from disturbances in future and restore the security of trade. [Chandarnagar letter of 24 November, 1746 cited in Pondichery letter of 31 January, 1747 (N. S.); Calcutta to Company, 30 November, 1746.]

At the end of this November, Raghunāth Jayārām, a Marātha agent at Murshidābād,

demanded the *chauth* for Bihār in the name of the Peshwā,—that for Bengal having been promised to Raghuji by Shāhu. The Nawāb replied, "The Emperor too has sent me a *farmān* about the *chauth* for Bengal, stating that the *chauth* has been assigned to the Peshwā and that his money should be sent to the imperial Court. I am writing to the Peshwā making my own representation [on the points in dispute.] Patna is mine, Bengal too is mine. I ought to act treating both provinces as one. The *chauth* for the two is inseparable." The Marātha envoy objected, saying, "How can the Peshwā's *chauth* and Raghuji's be considered as one and an indivisible thing? The latter is your enemy; entering your realm he has plundered and destroyed ten times the amount of the *chauth*. The Peshwā, on the other hand, has been entirely your friend. He gave you armed help in the past, and since then he has been exerting himself to settle your affairs. He has done his work; you now do yours and regulate your realm. If you fully pay up the subsidy for Bihār, then there will be no delay in despatching your affairs." Alivardi closed the discussion by saying that all his trust was in the Peshwā, and that the business would be done after the Peshwā had considered the representation he was writing to him about the position of

his Government. He evaded making any definite promise of payment. [*S. P. D.*, xx. 29 and 49.]

The inner meaning of the Nawāb's policy was that he was not prepared to make a separate agreement for the Bihār *chauth* with the Peshwā, when there was no guarantee that the Peshwā on being satisfied as to his own gain would not leave Raghuji a free hand to raid and tax Bengal and Orissā, instead of defending the three provinces together,—which was the Emperor's object in promising the *chauth*. The black-mail for the entire North-eastern country must be one charge payable to one authority and not two separate amounts payable to two mutually independent enemy chiefs.

§ 2. *The controversy about chauth.*

The point at issue between the Nawāb and the Peshwā comes out very clearly in the letters of Hingané, the Marātha envoy at the Court of Delhi, [*S. P. D.*, ii. 4 and 10.] Following the Emperor's *farmān* to Alivardi on the agreement made with Rājah Shāhu about paying to him the *chauth* for Bengal and Bihār, Hingané wrote to Alivardi: "By order of the Emperor, the Peshwā has settled the terms of peace concerning Bengal with King [Shāhu] and sent word to Raghuji forbidding him to enter the province of Bengal...Write to your

officers to remain at their posts in composure of mind and send the imperial revenue in full, as contracted by the Emperor, to Rājah Shāhu through the Peshwā. Then the disturbances in your country will cease."

Alivardi replied to the Emperor: "Your Majesty has written to me to the above effect, and I have also received a letter from Bālāji saying that in case Raghuji invades Bengal the Peshwā's generals [*i.e.*, Holkar and Sindhiā] have been kept ready with their troops on the frontier of Bundelkhand to come to the Patna and Gayā districts for my defence. And yet I have been repeatedly getting letters from Raghuji to inform me that he is coming. Then, what kind of settlement is thus? If a definite agreement has been concluded with Rājah Shāhu, why should Raghuji come at all? And for what reason has Bālāji Rao written thus? Why is not this uncertainty yet removed? So long as this apprehension remains, I, too, cannot afford to disband my army and my realm cannot be cultivated. The districts on the [western] bank of the Ganges have been devastated and not a *kauri* is being yielded by them. If some five Rupees are realised from this side [of the river], it is spent on my troops. Whence is the revenue coming and from what source can I send it? In this state of things, if

Raghuji or his army does not make any incursion this year, then at the end of the year my militia will be sent back to their homes, and whatever revenue is left [after discharging their dues] I shall send to His Majesty's Court."

Alivardi also wrote to the same effect to Hingané: "When terms have been settled with Rājah Shāhu, why is there an apprehension of Raghuji coming here? He is the Rājah's servant; a friendly agreement has been made [with the Rājah] about this province; now call him back and restrain him. When a man like the Peshwā himself has apprehensions about Raghuji invading Bengal, how can I be expected to disband my army and hope to see my country populated again? Whence can I send the full revenue to the Emperor? Therefore, I am determined to remain prepared for war [with Raghuji.] If he comes, I shall fight him; if he does not come, I shall remit such revenue as may be collected at the end of the year. You should write to your generals that when Raghuji sets out to invade this country, they should come to Bengal by the Rāmgarh, Pachet or Orissā route. What will they do by taking post in the Patna-Gayā districts? When they hear beforehand that Raghuji has issued from Berār and is actually coming to Bengal, and have verified the news, they should march directly to Bengal

without waiting to be summoned or written to. Then I shall join them and defeat him."

In reply to the objections of Alivardi, the Emperor wrote the following letter of reprimand, under pressure from the Marātha agent at his Court:—"Assuredly Raghuji is not going to Bengal. Why then are you maintaining an army? Disband it and by properly reassuring your subjects cause that country to be populated fully. Why cling to your suspicions? Send the revenue here in full quittance. If there is any deficit in collection, exactly that amout will be debited from Bālāji Rāo's account. His subsidy (*tankhā*) has been assigned upon you, and I have also asked him to realise as my collecting agent (*sazāwal*) whatever surplus remains due to my Government. So, send the full amount quickly."

Hingané also reassured the Nawāb in similar terms: "By a hundred thousand paths has the Peshwā confined Raghuji to the Deccan. By 19 routes out of 20 he is prevented from entering Bengal. If ever he sets out by a single [unblocked] path, then as our generals [Holkar and Sindhiā] are posted on the frontier of Bundelkhand, in fear of them he will not go to Bengal. And even if he does go, they will hasten [after him] and chastise him. You remain watchful at your place and send the imperial revenue in full clearance."

In short, Alivardi chose the wiser and manlier part of basing the defence of his realm on a strong army under his own control, instead of depending upon a protective force, maintained at his cost, to be sent out by the Peshwā for supporting him in the event of Raghuji's invasion, probably after half the province had been desolated and plundered and his subjects kept in perpetual alarm by the palpably defenceless condition of their ruler.

§ 3. *Policy and plans of Raghuji Bhonsle in 1746.*

We shall now turn to the state of things at the Court of Bhonslé. Raghuji after leaving Bengal and Bihār (in April 1746) came to Nāgpur in September, and was beset by his creditors. Even when he received three *lakhs* of Rupees as the ransom of the deputy governor of Orissā (at the end of next December), he repaid no part of his debt. After the *Dasaharā* (13 Sep. 1746), he marched into Berār at the head of an army reduced to about 2000 *pāgā* and the same number of *silāhdār* horse, while his son Jānoji, who had been nominated to lead an expedition into Bengal, stayed at Nāgpur with only a thousand men under his banners.

In the meantime, Mir Habib, dreading an attack by the Nawāb of Bengal in the coming cold

weather, appealed piteously to Raghuji in October,—"If your army arrives here [at Katak] soon, so much the better. If not, write what I should do." He agreed to pay a subsidy of eleven *lakhs* of Rupees to Raghuji, and Raghuji in return promised to send his troops for the defence of Orissā in the month of Kartik (October). But it was very difficult for Raghuji in his financial distress to fit out an expedition. A news-writer in his camp in Berār reported on 8th December, "Raghuji is enlisting men, but is unable to pay them in cash. He has decided to send a force into Bengal under Jānoji with the contingents of some officers [named here], none of whom has actually more than 100 to 500 men under him. They expect to muster ten thousand, which is very unlikely." [*S. P. D.*, xx. 41 and 44.] Thus, there was delay in the Rājah's reinforcing Mir Habib in Orissā.

§ 4. *Mir Jafar defeats Maratha army at Medinipur, December 1746.*

Mir Jafar, the *Bakhshi* or Army Chief of the Nawāb, though appointed deputy governor of Orissa, could not march out in the middle of 1746 for expelling the Marāthas from that province, as he was forced to halt near the capital for strengthening his army with the new levies ordered by the

Nawāb to replace the recently dismissed Afghān contigents of Shamshir Khān and Sardār Khān. At last, his ranks having been brought up to the necessary strength (about 7,500 men) and properly equipped, Mir Jafar marched into the Medinipur district in November, and after one or two minor skirmishes fought a decisive battle with Mir Habib's lieutenant Sayyid Nur, near Medinipur about 12th December 1746. The Sayyid, though reported as killed in an English letter from Balesar written four days after the battle, escaped towards Katak with the broken remnant of his army, but two of his head officers were killed. South of Balesar they were met and rallied by Mir Habib, who was returning after conquering Kanikā and dragging the Rājah of that place and his family into captivity. The general now hastened northwards to retrieve the situation. Arriving at Balesar, about 20th January 1747, Habib encamped two miles from the town, with 8,000 horse and 20,000 foot, and raised batteries along the Barā Bālang river to oppose the advance of the Bengal army. Jānoji, who had just reached Katak with his own army, started northwards in order to reinforce Mir Habib. [Bengal let. 22 Feb. 1747; letter from Pondichery, 31 Jan. 1747 (N.S.) *S. P. D.*, xx. 29.]

At this news, Mir Jafar, thinking that he was about to be outnumbered and enveloped by the Marāthas, lost heart, and without making any attempt to hold Medinipur, fled precipitately to Bardwān, abandoning some elephants and baggage of his army to the enemy (Feb. 1747.) Thus the year 1747 began with an unexpected reversal of fortune for the Nawāb. [*Siyar*, ii. 156-157.]

Just then the Nawāb's arms were paralysed by treason among his most favoured and trusted generals. Mir Jafar (his *Bakhshi*) and Aṭāullah (his *faujdār* of Rājmahal) formed a conspiracy to murder the Nawāb one day at their audience with him and then divide the thrones of Bengal and Bihār between themselves. But the secret reached the Nawāb's ears, and Atāullah was forced to resign and Mir Jafar's contingent was broken up and taken over by the Nawāb. [*Siyar*, ii. 157.]

§ 5. *Aliṿardi's campaign against Janoji, March 1747.*

Thus Alivardi was left alone to face the united Afghāns and Marāthas. Mustafa Khān, Shamshir Khān, Sardār Khān and other veterans of note were gone with their forces, and now he lost the services of his two best war-experienced kinsmen and generals familiar with his troops.

But nothing daunted, this old man of seventy-one personally took command of his army, marched out of his camp, and after fighting a severely contested battle near Bardwān (March 1747) defeated Jānoji and the entire Marātha army with heavy loss. Thereafter the Marāthas had not the heart to face him again in the field. They once more tried their old game of slipping past the Nawāb's flank and making a dash upon Murshidābād in his absence. But so quick was Alivardi's return behind them that they were prevented from doing any damage to the capital, though they sacked and burnt some villages near it as usual. So, the baffled raiders fled back to Medinipur, the Murshidābād and Bardwān districts were temporarily cleared of them, and at the approach of the rainy season the Nawāb returned to his capital. [*Siyar*, ii. 158.]

During the whole of this year, 1747, the Marāthas remained in undisturbed possession of Orissā up to Medinipur. Their stay in and about Balesar, according to a Calcutta letter of 24 Feb. 1748, "has in a great measure prevented the currency of trade and occasioned a scarcity of all sorts of grain, the country people flying from their habitations upon every trifling rumour of their entering into this province."

§ 6. *Patna governor enlists Darbhanga Afghans.*

We have seen how six thousand Afghān troops under Shamshir Khān, Sardār Khān and other generals of that race, had left the Nawāb's service in June 1746 and gone to their homes in North Bihār. Zainuddin Ahmad Haibat Jang, the governor of Patna, had pressed on Alivardi the bold strategy of offensive which had led to the expulsion of Bhāskar from Katwā in September 1742, and he had also defeated the formidable assault of Mustafa Khān upon Patna city in March 1745 and afterwards (in June) had slain him in battle in the Shāhābād district. These achievements had given him boundless conceit about his own capacity and he dreamt of seizing the throne of the three provinces by overthrowing the aged Alivardi, whose vast wealth and lavish gifts to his other kinsmen Zainuddin had seen with his own eyes in Murshidābād when invited to Sirājud-daulah's marriage. For such an enterprise there could be no better instrument than these Afghān veterans of many a former war of the Nawab and their generals who enjoyed the highest military repute through the entire province. Moreover, their hearts were sore against Alivardi and they would readily join any scheme for overthrowing him.

Zainuddin became eager to enlist these

Afghāns in his own army. He wrote to Alivardi that so many able-bodied and expert soldiers, fretting idly at home in Dārbhangā with no means of livelihood in sight of them, constituted a formidable menace to the peace of his province. And yet it was beyond the Bihār governor's armed strength to drive them out of the province. The best solution of the problem, therefore, was to keep them out of mischief by taking 3,000 of their men and all their officers into his service, if the Nawāb would meet this additional military expenditure out of the revenue of Bengal. Alivardi grudgingly consented; and Zainuddin sent his agents to Dārbhangā to invite the Afghāns to come to Patna and enter his army.

They wanted to know the terms of pay and service first, and were moreover not free from the suspicion that this invitation was a ruse of Alivardi to get them into his power and then crush them with ease. To settle the question more quickly and also to reassure their minds, Zainuddin asked them to come to Hājipur, opposite Patna and on their side of the Ganges. Leaving Dārbhangā on 10th December, 1747, they reached Hājipur on the 16th and remained encamped there for a fortnight, while negotiations were being constantly exchanged with the governor in Patna. Zainuddin, blinded by his eagerness to secure these

valuable soldiers and make friends with their powerful leaders, visited them in their camp at Hājipur quite unattended, and when early in January 1748 they came over to Patna and halted in Jafar Khān's garden, he ordered the guards to be removed from their path and also from his palace of *Chihil satun*, in order to leave no ground for suspicion in the minds of the Afghāns.

§ 7. *Afghan soldiers murder the governor, seize and plunder Patna.*

The terms were at last settled and 13th January was fixed for the ceremonial presentation of the Afghān chiefs and their retainers. During the Court held for the purpose, there was an immense and boisterous crowd of three to four thousand Afghān soldiers fully armed, under Shamshir Khān, in the street leading to the palace, while the Audience Hall (*Chihil satun*) was thronged with another band of 500 Afghāns under Murād Sher Khān, who had come first and who after presenting his followers one by one, told them to take leave of the governor in order to make room for Shamshir Khān's men. At this farewell ceremony, one Abdur Rashid Khān, according to their preconcerted plan, stabbed at Zainuddin with his waist-dagger, but his hand shook so much from nervousness that the weapon had no effect. Then

Murād Sher Khān started up and with one tremendous blow of his sword cut Zainuddin into two from the shoulder-blade to the pelvis.

Then followed a general assault and plunder of the governor's officers and attendants, many of whom were slain or wounded, some after an attempt at self-defence and others helplessly. A few escaped after being stripped of their robes and arms. The whole palace and city were now in uproar and alarm; but the surprised and outnumbered royal troops could do nothing without a leader or known plan of defence. The porters and guards fled from their posts in the harem, but Zainuddin's widow promptly closed the gates and thus saved the women's quarters from an immediate sack. No stand was made against the Afghāns, who seized the murdered governor's aged father Hāji Ahmad and tortured him for seventeen days to make him divulge the place of his buried treasure, till at last (on 30th January) death released him from his sufferings. Guards were placed round the palaces of the two murdered nobles and thus Zainuddin's wife and children became prisoners. The entire city passed into the hands of the Afghāns, and the people were subjected to frightful oppression and insult for the sake of extorting money. The news that a king of their own race had again risen in Afghanistan

and had captured Kābul and Qandahār almost unopposed, and was advancing victoriously upon Delhi, had emboldened the Dārbhangā Afghāns to do these acts of violence and usurpation. They dreamt of a return of the days of Sher Shah, another Afghān of Bihār who had driven out the Mughal from the throne of Delhi and given the sovereignty of India to an Afghān dynasty once again.

For three months (13th January to 16th April, 1748) Bihār tasted Afghān rule. But it was a quite different type of Afghān rule from the strong orderly and beneficent administration which Sher Shāh had given to the province of his birth two centuries before.

Hāji Ahmad's buried treasure was dug out from beneath the stone of the Prophet's footprint where he used to keep it concealed. Sixty to seventy *lakhs* of Rupees in gold and silver coins besides jewellery were secured in his house. Zainuddin's house yielded about three *lakhs* according to popular report, but only a few thousands according to another statement. "During their few days of power the Afghāns robbed and dishonoured the people of Patna to an unspeakable extent." (*Siyar,* ii. 159—163.) "In the same way they surrounded the houses of the great men of the city and robbed them.

Plunder and sack by the Ruhelas raged in the city and its environs; the life, property and family honour of multitudes were destroyed, and the signs of Doomsday appeared." (Salimullah, 129*a*.)

§ 8. *Gathering of Afghan army under rebel chiefs.*

After seizing the Government of Patna, Shamshir Khān encamped outside in Jafar Khān's garden, leaving Murād Sher Khan in charge of the city. Knowing that Alivardi was sure to come and call him to account for his misdeeds, he prepared himself for the coming contest by increasing his army with feverish haste and lavish expenditure of money on Afghān recruits and summoning his tribesmen from all sides to his standard. "This year Afghāns swarmed out of the ground like white ants. Every day the citizens of Patna were roused by the noise of kettle-drums five or six times, and on inquiry learnt that an Afghān captain named so-and-so had come from such and such a place with his contingent of so many men to enlist under Shamshir Khān or Sardār Khān" and was marching through the town to the camp in full military pomp. (*Siyar,* ii. 162). In this way nearly 40,000 horse and a somewhat smaller number of infantry were gathered round the

Afghān leaders in the course of three months,—the cavalry were almost entirely Pathāns and the foot consisted of a strong body of Bahelia musketeers under a *bakhshi* of their own. In addition to these, the Marāthas, then in Bengal, were repeatedly written to for coming to Patna and joining the Afghān army in an attack on Alivardi. When the news came that the Nawāb was advancing from his capital towards Bihār, Shamshir Khān and Murād Sher Khān had the Nawāb's daughter, Amina Begam (the widow of Zain-uddin), and her little daughter and son taken out of their palace in Patna, placed them in a bullock cart without a roof or awning over their heads, and thus carried them in public exposure and humiliation through the streets of the city to their camp outside it. It only made the citizens condemn and curse these shameless miscreants.

§ 9. *Alivardi marches into Bihar against the Afghān rebels.*

The news of the tragic death of his son-in-law and brother, the widowhood and humiliation of his daughter, and the loss of the entire province of Bihār threw Alivardi into the deepest grief and depression of spirit. The Nawāb held a council and offered everyone of his followers a free choice between staying at home or accompanying him

in that dangerous enterprise. As for himself, he told them, his heart was set on death in honourable fight rather than bearing such sorrow and humiliation any longer. They all vowed to follow him to the death. Loans were hastily raised from far and near, and the soldiers' dues were cleared in part. Efficient arrangements were made for the protection of Murshidābād during his absence. (*Siyar* ii. 164-165.) Fifteen hundred men from Purniā joined him on the way. In the meantime the Peshwā Bālāji Rāo had been appealed to for aid and was reported to be approaching Patna from the west.

On February 29, Alivardi issued from his camp at Amāniganj and marched towards Bihār. At Komrāh (25 miles north of Murshidābad, on the way to Rājmahal) he was brought to a long halt, as his troops refused to go further unless they were paid more money. The Nawāb, however, satisfied his troops, resumed his march, passed through Sakrigali (*c.* 17 March) and reached Bhāgalpur. Here the Marāthas under Mir Habib, who had hastened behind him from Bengal, issued from the shorter and unfrequented jungle path that they had taken, and on the *nālā* of Champānagar attacked the rear of the Nawāb's army, but were put to flight after doing some loss to the camp-followers. They then hastened west-

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wards in advance of the Nawāb and joined the Afghāns some distance east of Patna, as also did the party of Jānoji. At Mungir the Nawāb halted for some days to give rest to his wearied troops and then pushed on to Bārh on the Ganges, 34 miles east of Patna (*c.* 14 April.)

The Afghāns at Patna after inviting Mir Habib, Mohan Singh and some other Marātha officers to an interview, confined them, demanding 30 to 40 *lakhs* of Rupees as their pay, on the ground that they had been led into this rebellion at the instigation of the Marāthas, who had promised to pay their expenses. The generals were released only after Mir Habib had given bankers' security for two *lakhs* of Rupees. Then the allies advanced towards Bārh to oppose Alivardi.* The Afghān army was about 35,000 strong; the Marāthas were reported as 30,000 (*Siyar*, ii. 167), but 12,000 is a more probable number. All the artillery of Patna fort accompanied the rebels; the Nawāb's army is estimated in *Siyar*, (ii. 164) at 15,000 horse and 8,000 *barqāndāzes* (foot musketeers.)

* Shamshir Khan left his *diwan* Ahmad Khan Qureshi (misspelt in the Bengal Consultations as *Hamed Khan Carachea*) with 2,500 men behind him in charge of Patna. (*Beng Consult*, 8 March and 26 April, 1748). This Ahmad was the grandson of Daud Khan Qureshi, the founder of Daudnagar. (*Siyar*, ii. 129.)

§ 10. *Battle of Rānisarai or Kālādiārā.*

Alivardi had conducted his march keeping the Ganges close on his right hand, so as to have that flank naturally protected and also to assure his water and food supply. Immediately west of the city of Bārh, the Ganges divides itself into several branches, which enclose between them a vast island or group of islands, now called the "Rāmnagar diārā." The main volume of the river water flows through the northernmost channel, while nearly two miles south of it lies the old or deserted bed of the Ganges forming a very thin shallow stream in the dry weather. The Mughal military road from Sakrigali (the eastern frontier post of Bihār) to Patna runs close to the south bank of the Ganges and is intersected by many smaller streams, which after running northwards drain themselves into that great river.

This old bed of the Ganges has to be crossed a short distance to the west of Bārh town. The ford over it was strongly entrenched and defended by the Afghān army with their big guns placed carefully in position and trained beforehand on the road by which their enemy would have to advance. But Alivardi Khān, "who in generalship had no equal in that age except Asaf Jāh the Nizām" (*Siyar*, ii. 166), at the first view realised

the strength of the Afghān position and took no wild chance. After leaving Bārh, instead of risking a frontal attack on such a strong and prepared position across a river, he turned it by making a detour to the left, *i.e.*, southwards and away from the Ganges and the public highway, under the guidance of a local zamindār, crossed the same stream two miles further west at a ford unknown to the Afghāns, regained the Patna road and threatened to cut the enemy's communication with that town. This unexpected manoeuvre, which the Afghāns could ascribe to nothing but magic, forced them to make a hurried change of front deserting all their guns *in situ* and running westwards to a place opposite the Nawāb's new position. Thus they lost the use of nearly all their artillery, —which fact had a decisive influence on the next day's battle. That night the two armies lay facing each other. The Nawāb spent it in strict vigil and precaution against surprise. Early on the following morning he cast himself down on the ground in abasement before his Maker, rubbed his forehead with the hallowed earth of the grave of Imām Husain at Karbalā, and with tears in his eyes prayed to God to give him either victory or death in the coming battle.

It was the 16th of April 1748. Alivardi

advanced to the village of Rānisarāi,* eight miles west of Bārh, and marshalled his ranks on the plain. His big artillery (*top-i-jinsi*) was posted in front, the lighter pieces (*top-i-dasti*) behind these, and then came the horse and foot of the vanguard in support. As usual, the Nawāb took his post in the centre.

The Afghāns had also drawn up their army in the customary fashion of that age. They had, however, taken advantage of the ground by adopting a novel device. Their army formed a long line of two miles or more from Rāni-sarāi eastwards to Kālā-diārā, but their left wing under Hayāt Khān, with some large guns, was pushed across a small stream that here runs into the Ganges, and ordered to fire on the Nawāb's right wing when it would come up opposite. The

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* *Siyar,* ii. 167. Rennell gives *Ranny Chock,* about 10 miles w. of Barh, on the highway to Patna, and very close to the Bakhtiarpur Railway station. *Bengal Consult.,* 26 April, records a letter from Qasimbazar dated the 23rd, reporting the news that "the Nawab had killed Shamshir Khan and Murad Sher Khan in battle at *Cullodee*". Rennell gives *Colla derrah* (Kaladiara) six miles s. w. of Barh and four miles e. of Ranny Chock. Babu Ram Lal Sinha, B.L., tells me that the village Kala-diara still stands on the south bank of the Ganges north-east of the Khusrupur Rl. stn. Salimullah (130 *a*) places the battle at Punarak, which is absurd.

Marāthas could be seen on the left hand some distance behind, waiting to plunder whichever side should lose the day.

Ignoring the Marātha light horse as beneath his notice and pointing to the Afghāns as "There are my enemies," the Nawāb advanced upon their massed ranks. The battle began with a discharge of guns. In this Alivardi had a decided superiority, as the Afghāns had abandoned most of their heavy pieces at the ford four miles eastwards the day before. At the first cannonade Sardār Khān's head was blown away. He commanded nearly half the rebel force and his death on the back of his elephant, visible from far and near, shook the men of his division. Alivardi's youthful captains were eager to charge the enemy at once, but the cool-headed veteran pulled them up short, letting his musketeers do their work first. His *barqāndāzes* fired volley after volley into the enemy ranks crowded on the sand bank, "darkening the bright day with smoke." Seeing the enemy now really hard pressed, the Nawāb ordered two officers to make a charge, but the order met with no immediate response. During this confusion the Marāthas and Mir Habib's Afghāns (the former retainers of Mustafa) made an attack on the Nawāb's baggage in the rear, and driving

a crowd of servants before them approached the centre. But the Nawāb, never giving these enemies a thought, ordered his vanguard to charge the main Afghān army in front and advanced on his elephant with his guards, in support of the vanguard, his band playing the music of victory. His generals vied with one another in driving their elephants into the enemy's ranks. The engagement now became close and general all along the line. Murād Sher Khān fell back into his *hawdā* wounded by a musket-ball; two Nawābi officers jumped on his elephant and cut off his head. In another part of the field, during the confusion of the fight Shamshir Khān fell down from his elephant and was beheaded on the ground. The Afghān army now helplessly broke and fled; the Marāthas also quickly disappeared from a field where they had contributed nothing to the fight and found no chance of securing booty. The Nawāb's victory was complete. He occupied the enemy's deserted camp, and then marched to Baikunthpur, 12 miles west of the battlefield, where he halted for a few days, and finally entered Patna in triumph. A great cloud of terror was lifted up from the hearts of the people of Patna, high and low alike, and life returned to their bodies, as it were. [*Siyar*, ii. 165—168.]

§ 11. *Alivardi halts at Patna for six months, 1748; condition of Bengal.*

He consoled his bereaved daughter and other relatives, restored the administration of the province and in a most generous spirit of chivalry sent away with every care and honour the widow and daughter of Shamshir Khān, who had been captured, to their homes, even giving them some villages for their livelihood, as he did not make war upon women. One day before this battle the Emperor Muhammad Shāh had died at Delhi. Alivardi passed the next six months in Patna trying to make some satisfactory arrangement for the Bihār governorship and watching the course of events at the imperial Court, the policy of the new Emperor and his ministers towards the *subahdar* of Bengal, Bihār and Orissā, and the movements of Ahmad Abdāli, who was expected to make an incursion into India during this change of rulers at Delhi. After appointing Sirājud-daulah as absentee *nāib nāzim* of Bihār, with Rājah Jānaki-rām as his deputy and acting ruler, the Nawāb left Patna about 6th November and arrived at Murshidābād on the last day of the month. [*Siyar,* ii. 171; French factory letter of 10 September 1748 (N. S.); Bengal letter, 22 December, 1748.]

During the Pathān usurpation of Bihār the news spread over the land that dismemberment had begun in the Nawāb's dominions, his authority had ceased, and there was none to enforce order or control the realm. Lawless men raised their heads everywhere without any fear of check or punishment. On 15th February the Qāsimbāzār factory of the English despatched a fleet of boats laden with the Company's goods (mostly raw silk) to the value of Rs. 3,95,031 and private treasure and merchandise worth Rs. 35,000, to proceed to Calcutta in charge of Ensign English and a small party of soldiers. His way lay by Katwā, which was then the chief station of the Marāthas and where Jānoji was present in person. The Marāthas plundered the goods and treasure in the fleet without any opposition from the escort (17th February).

At the approach of a detachment of the Nawāb's troops under Fath Ali, the Marāthas left Katwā, carrying everything away from thence. For some time after, their main body remained near Bardwān, while several straggling parties of them were scattered about the country. (*Bengal Consult*, 25th Feb., 8th March, 1748). But on the Nawāb leaving his capital for Patna (29th Feb.), they returned to Katwā, a large party of

them being reported at Kātālia, ten miles from that town, in a factory letter of 14th March. They also captured Thānā fort near Calcutta. However, soon afterwards the entire Marātha force in Bengal hastened to Bihār to join Shamshir Khān, especially as the Peshwā was reported to be on his march to these eastern provinces to support Alivardi Khān, as he had done in 1743.

After the crushing defeat of his Afghān allies at Rāni-sarāi (16th April), Jānoji with Mir Habib and all their troops slipped past the Nawāb and turned towards Murshidabād. But on the way he heard of the death of his mother, and himself with a few men took the road to Nāgpur, sending Mir Habib with the bulk of the troops towards Medinipur. After Jānoji's arrival at home Raghuji sent his younger son Sābāji* with a Marātha force to strengthen Mir Habib.

For a year after the victory of Rāni-sarāi, Bengal and Bihār enjoyed a respite from the *Bargi* visitation; but Orissā from Medinipur southwards remained in the undisputed possession of the Marāthas.

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* *Siyar,* ii. 175, wrongly calls him *Mānāji.* But Raghuji had no son named Mānāji. *SP.D.* xx. 55 mentions Sābāji Bhonslé as returned from Bengal to Nāgpur in 1749.

§ 12. *Alivardi recovers Katak.*

About the middle of March, 1749, Alivardi went to Katwā and there began to assemble an army for the recovery of Orissā. Some months before this he had detached a column, eight thousand strong, to Bardwān to block the usual road of the Marāthas from the south. When the Nawāb himself reached Bardwān, the men of his portable artillery (*topkhānah-i-dasti*) mutinied for their arrears of pay and created a tumult. The Nawāb in anger dismissed them all and set out against the enemy without any artillery whatever. A few of his officers also ran away at this time, to avoid the hardship and dangers of campaigning in that barren country in the hot weather. But nothing daunted, Alivardi, now 73 years old, advanced towards the enemy in Medinipur. At the news of his approach, Mir Habib set fire to his encampment and fled southwards. The Nawāb, without entering the town of Medinipur, skirted it, crossed the Kānsāi river, and halted on the further side. Then getting intelligence of the enemy being present in the jungles of Medinipur, he sent a detachment which made a night attack and routed them.

Alivardi continued the pursuit. Advancing to Balesar he learnt that Sābāji and Mir Habib,

finding their soldiers powerless to stand up to a fight with the Nawāb's forces, had fled far away through the jungles of Katak. Alivardi pushed on towards Katak, crossed the two branches of the Baitarani river at Bhadrak and Jājpur, and took post at Barā about 36 miles north of Katāk. Here he received letters from Sayyid Nur, Sarāndāz Khān and Dharmadās (the Captain of the musketeers), who had gone over to the Marāthas and had been left by them in charge of the fort of Barābāti and the district round Katak town, offering to submit to Alivardi whenever he would arrive there.

But the Nawāb was too old a general to act in heedless haste. He first searched the dense jungle for Mir Habib for some time; but no trace of the Marāthas having been found, he issued from the jungle, left a force to watch the pass leading out of it, and with 2,000 men made a forced march from Barā to Katak, riding all that night and half of the next day, suffering terribly from the heat of the May day sun along a treeless road. At the end of eighteen hours of continuous exertion, with his escort reduced to three hundred worn-out horsemen, the Nawāb arrived before Barābāti at noon (*c.* 17th May, 1749). No baggage or tent had been able to keep up with him. The garrison agreed to capitulate the next day.

Next morning, when the officers of the fort came to interview the Nawāb, Sayyid Nur and Dharmadās were made prisoners by previous order of Alivardi, while Sarāndāz Khān who resisted arrest was cut down. The garrison shut the gates and showed fight, and so the Nawāb had to invest the fort. He entered the city of Katak (*c.* 18 May), and fifteen days later received the surrender of Barābāti. Thus, the reconquest of Orissā was complete. But to the ruler of Bengal Katak was easier to conquer than to hold, with the Marāthas permanently in occupation of its southern and western flanks, innumerable tracks through the jungles leading out of these places, and a single long and difficult route connecting Katak with Bengal which was closed by floods during half the year. Noble after noble declined the governorship of Orissā offered to them by the Nawāb, as they knew that with the small provincial contingent they would not be able to hold out against the Marāthas for a week after the Nawāb had set out on his return to Bengal with his army. At last a thoughtless beggar named Shaikh Abdus Subhān, who was serving in Durlabhrām's squadron, jumped at the prospect of becoming a Deputy Nawāb, and was appointed governor of the province. Alivardi quickly left Katak and hastened towards Bengal, in order to avoid the

coming rainy season which would render the innumerable streams across his path impassable. [*Siyar*, ii. 175—177.]

§ 13. *Katak reconquered by Marathas, June 1749.*

But the result was as every body had foreseen. Six or seven days after Alivardi had marched out of Katak, Mir Habib reappeared before that town, defeated and captured the seven days' *nāib-nāzim*, who, however, fought most gallantly against tenfold odds and was severely wounded,—and so the Marāthas recovered the capital of Orissā. Thus, Alivardi's work was undone within a week. But the Nawāb was in no position to return to Katak and expel the Marāthas. His troops had been suffering unspeakable hardship and privation in their homeward march. The June sun was fierce overhead, with no avenue of trees along the roads; then the monsoon burst and it rained heavily day after day, the *nālās* across the road turned into raging torrents; no food could be procured locally. Under such circumstances, the draggled Bengal army reached Balesar on 6th June. It was in no condition or mood to face a new campaign and repeat this labour of Sisyphus. The Nawāb's health was breaking down under his recent exertions. So, he set his face homewards, and reached Murshidābād at the beginning of July. [*Siyar*, ii.

178; *Beng. Consult.*, 24, 27 and 29 May, 17 June, 1749.]

§ 14. *Alivardi at Medinipur.*

Alivardi's reconquest of Orissā in the summer of 1749, coming so soon after his recovery of Bihār in April 1748, was a splendid achievement, but it was destined to be his last. The forced march that ensured the fall of Katak without a blow, the blistering sun that had to be endured overhead for weeks together, the muddy roads and rain-swollen streams that had to be crossed, and the scanty and coarse food that a poor jungly province solely yielded, all told upon the body of an old man of 73 who had scorned delights and lived laborious days throughout a long life, and had almost every year since his accession had to meet and defeat some enemy at home or abroad, from the bosom of his family and the circle of his lieutenants as much as from across the frontier. Soon after his return from Orissā, the Nawāb had a serious illness which continued well into October 1749. [*Bengal Consult*, 18 Oct. 1749.]

But there was no rest for Alivardi. On recovering from this illness, he disported himself for a few days, by deer hunt at Mihirpur (24 miles due east of Palāshi), and then marched to Katwā. After assembling his army here, he advanced *via*

Bardwān to Medinipur (December, 1749). Meantime, Mir Habib had come to Balesar about 15th October, with Mohan Singh and the Marātha force, while the Pathāns (under Mustafa Khān's son Murtazā) who formed his rearguard, arrived two days later, making a total of 40,000 men. [*Bengal Consult.*, 26 Oct. 1749; *Siyar*, ii. 179.]

This year Alivardi decided to form a permanent cantonment at Medinipur, so as to keep the path of Marātha raids into Bengal from Orissa always closed. In the camp at Medinipur the Nawāb tried to check abuses in his army, with the consequence of alienating his troops. There was gross peculation through collusion between the captains and the pay-clerks. A muster was held when it was found that in general only one-fourth of the troops paid for by Government were actually kept in service. In one officer's command the robbery of public money was so outrageous that out of the 1,700 men for whom he had been drawing pay regularly year after year, only eighty were really present and all the rest were "dead musters". When the Nawāb cut down the allowances of the officers to the actual strength of their contingents, they became highly discontented, and the reform had to be stopped. (*Siyar*, ii. 180.)

While this internal trouble was raging in the

Medinipur cantonment, towards the end of February 1750, a body of several thousand Marāthas slipped past him and plundered the country as far as Rājmahal, whence they turned towards Murshidābād. About 6th March, Mir Habib at the head of 12,000 horse arrived four miles from that city, and had a skirmish with Mir Jafar's troops, who were driven back nearer to the capital. For some days the two armies lay facing each other, but the Marāthas continued to send out parties daily to burn and plunder all around them. (Qāsimbāzār factory letters, 4th and 9th March 1750.) At this news, Alivardi quickly fell back from Medinipur to Bardwān, but on hearing of his march the raiders turned aside and took refuge in the jungles of West Bengal. The Nawāb halted at Bardwān, in diwan Mānikchānd's garden outside the city, for some time, and then returned to Medinipur (April 1750.) The baffled Marāthas had shown themselves here, but disappeared before the Nawāb's arrival. Permanent quarters for the officers and men and mansions for the Nawāb were now built here and the ladies of the harem were summoned from Murshidābād, as no officer would undertake the perilous post of *faujdār* of Medinipur and the Nawāb was therefore compelled to stay there in person.

§ 15. *Sirājuddaulah assaults Patna city, June, 1750.*

But a fresh trouble was brewing for Alivardi. His darling grandson and intended heir, Sirāj-uddaulah, was instigated by Sayyid Mahdi Nisār Khān (the paternal uncle of the historian Ghulām Husain and a discontented ex-officer of the Nawāb's army), to make a dash on Patna, seize the government of the province from the Nawāb's agent, and make himself independent. The foolish and capricious lad, took leave from the camp at Medinipur, on the pretext of visiting the palaces and gardens at Murshidābād, and slipped out of that town with his wife. Arrived at Patna, he with Mahdi Nisār Khān delivered an attack on the city. The defenders hesitated to fire on their future master and the apple of the eye of their present sovereign. Some of the assailants got inside through an old drain for rainwater near the western gaṭe, called the *khirki* of Begampurā, threw the gate open and admitted Sirājuddaulah. In the fighting in the narrow streets of Hājiganj the loyal troops were steadily driven back and Sirāj's followers seemed to be on the point of capturing the entire city, when first Amānat Khān, then Mirzā Madāri Beg Deccani, and finally Mahdi Nisār were killed. At this fall of their leaders the

rebels lost heart and fled out of the city. Sirāj took refuge in a private house safe and sound, to the intense relief of Rājah Jānakirām and the garrison of the city, (*c.* 27 June, 1750.) [*Siyar*, ii. 182—185.]

Meantime, immediately on hearing of Sirāj's flight from Murshidābād towards Patna, Alivardi had started from Medinipur after him, though the rainy season had begun and the roads were becoming impassable. Halting only one day at Murshidābād, he hastened to Bihār, and when arrived at Ghiyāspur (midway between Bārh and Fatuā) heard of the attack on Patna and Sirāj's defeat. With infinite tenderness he soothed the mind of the young rebel and restored him to all his favour, and then set off with him back to Murshidābād. At Patna the old Nawāb was seized with a high burning fever, but he could not stop there, in view of the threat of the Marāthas to Medinipur and the incompetence and cowardice of the agents left by the Nawāb there. So, the sick Alivardi glided down the Ganges in a boat, attended by physicians, and after reaching Murshidābād and undergoing further treatment recovered (in September.)

All this time despair and consternation had been raging in the camp at Medinipur. The Nawāb's illness was believed to be fatal in view

of his extreme old age. In fact, Mir Jafar and Rājah Durlabhrām, who had been left by the Nawāb in command at Medinipur, were utterly incompetent and thoroughly shaken in spirit by their previous unfortunate encounters with the Marāthas. The situation at Medinipur became so critical, that the Nawāb had to set out for that place soon after his recovery from the fever, though he was still weak and far from having regained his normal health (December 1750). Here he fought Mir Habib and drove him into the western jungles. After some pursuit the enemy were compelled to flee towards Katak. The Nawāb then returned to Katwā (February 1751), putting off the recovery of Orissā to the next winter. [*Siyar*, ii. 187.]

§ 16. *Peace treaty with Marathas, 1751.*

Both sides were now eager for peace. Mir Habib and the Marāthas realised that it was useless to continue such a harassing war, which brought them no ultimate gain. Raghuji was more involved in debt than ever before; as a financial speculation his invasion of the eastern provinces had failed. Even Orissā, which he had now been occupying for some years, was such a poor province and the Marātha occupation of it was so often interrupted by their expulsion from it,

that his income from the conquest had not covered his expenses. When in 1749 his son Sābāji beat a hurried retreat from that province to Nāgpur, his soldiers pressed Raghuji hard for their heavy arrears of salary, and the Rājah had not the means of satisfying them or any other creditor. A friendly arrangement with the Nawāb would give the Marāthas an assured income without the expense of collecting it fitfully and by force.

Alivardi Khān was now 75 years old, and felt the weight of age and the approach of death. His troops were thoroughly worn out by their incessant campaigns and forced marches against domestic and foreign enemies; his subjects in Western and Southern Bengal had been utterly impoverished by the yearly raid and destruction of the Bargis. His Government was wellnigh bankrupt, and both he and his subjects required years of peace to recuperate. So, he listened to his well-wishers and permitted Mir Jafar to act as an intermediary and open peace negotiations with the Marāthas, (March 1751.) Mir Jafar sent two of his men to Habib, who welcomed the proposal and despatched his own agent Mirzā Sālih with the Bengal envoys to Mir Jafar, who introduced him to the Nawāb, then at Katwā. The party proceeded in the Nawāb's train to Murshidābād where the terms were settled. The draft treaty was

referred to the Court of Nāgpur and finally in May or June 1751 a peace was signed on the following conditions :

(1) Mir Habib would now become a servant of Alivardi and act as *nāib-nāzim* (deputy governor) of Orissā on his behalf. He should pay the surplus revenue of the province to Raghuji's army as their salary.

(2) From the Bengal revenue twelve *lakhs* of Rupees a year would be paid to Raghuji as *chauth* for that province.

(3) The Marātha Government agreed not to set foot in Alivardi's dominions again. The frontier of Bengal was fixed at and including the river Suvarnarekha* near Jalesar, and the Marāthas bound themselves never to cross it again. Thus the district of Medinipur was once more joined to Bengal. (*Siyar*, ii. 188).

§ 17. *Murder of Mir Habib, 1752.*

Now at last Mir Habib, after long years of ceaseless toil, bloodshed, plunder and devastation of these provinces, attained to his life's ambition; he became the master of a province. But he did not long enjoy his new power and dignity. In his speedy and tragic downfall the author of *Siyar-*

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* Misprinted as *Sona-makia* in *Siyar*, ii. 188.

ul-mutākhkharin sees the hand of divine justice. As he writes, "When poor Mir Habib, after so much exertion was on the point of eating the fruit of the tree of his oppression, he was seized with retribution for his cruelty to the innocent multitudes who had been ruined in the raids of his troops and the Marāthas, and he passed away in irretrievable disappointment and loss." (ii. 190). A year after the conclusion of the peace, Jānoji arrived at Katak as his father's representative and took charge of the Marātha army. The Marātha Brāhmans were chafing under Mir Habib's rule, and refused to take their orders from him any longer as he was now Alivardi's officer and not Raghuji's. Habib as a good administrator could not have allowed the extortion and peculation dear to the hearts of Marātha officers in a newly conquered province, and his honesty and care for the people made him hateful to these blood-suckers. They pressed Jānoji to call upon Habib to render an account of the income and expenditure of the province and of the division of the *chauth* of Bengal between the Marātha and Afghān soldiers, during his fourteen or fifteen months of stewardship. Jānoji agreed, as he could not brook a rival to his authority in the person of Alivardi's agent. So, a plot was formed to get rid of Habib. Jānoji invited Mir Habib and his chief followers,

to the number of 40 or 50, to his tent, conversed with them pleasantly for the rest of the day, and about sunset took leave to go out and perform his evening *pujā*. Immediately afterwards, the Marātha soldiers crowded into the tent, encircled Mir Habib, and told him that he would not be allowed to leave the tent before he rendered accounts and gave bonds for the money that he had misappropriated. Habib argued with them for some time, and then at last realised that the whole thing was a plot for killing him. So, about midnight he and his followers drew their swords and tried to cut their way through the Marāthas, but were all killed,* (24 Aug. 1752.)

§ 18. *How Orissa became a Maratha province.*

Mir Habib was succeeded by Musālih-ud-din Muhammad Khān, a courtier of Raghuji, as *nāib nāzim* of Orissā. But though legally a representative of Alivardi Khān, he acted in all matters

* We get this exact date (4 Sept., New style) in a French factory letter, Chandarnagar to Masulipatam, dated 11 Oct. 1752 (N S.), *Correspondance du Conseil de Chandernagor avec divers*, ii. 435. *Siyar*, ii. 189-190.

Therefore, *Siyar*, ii. 188, is wrong in saying that the treaty was signed at the beginning of 1165 A. H. (which commenced on 9th Nov. 1751), because on the next page it is stated that Habib was murdered one year and a few months after the conclusion of this peace.

as a servant of the Marātha Rājah, and had no real control over the administration such as Habib had exercised. (*Siyar,* ii. 190). Thus, in a few years Orissā passed entirely out of the hands of the *subahdār* of Bengal and Bihār, and became a Marātha province. This was the one permanent result of the Bargi invasions. Another was that the Marāthas showed the way for the organised looting of Bengal and Bihār to the up-country robber bands calling themselves *sannyāsis* and *faqirs,* whom it required the genius of a Warren Hastings to suppress.

It is a mistake to say that Alivardi ceded Orissā to the Marāthas. The terms of the treaty of 1751 clearly show that the province was divided into two parts; of the northern and more civilised corner, which included the important cities of Medinipur and Jalesar, he retained full possession and government; the southern and more sparsely populated portion, including the great trade centre of Balesar, the capital Katak, and the holy city of Puri, was to be governed by his own officers, but its revenue was assigned to the Marāthas, or in other words it became one vast *jāgir* for them without any change in its territorial sovereignty. This was the theory; but in practice, the weakness of Alivardi's successors, the revolutions at the Court of Murshidābād, and the confusion attend-

ing the transfer of real power from the titular Nawāb to the English Company, all enabled the Marāthas to turn their fiscal right over Orissā into full political sovereignty and to annex it to their kingdom of Berār.

First, after the death of Mir Habib (1752), the new deputy of Alivardi in the province was selected from among the officers of the Court of Nāgpur. This man, Musālih-ud-din Muhammad Khān, by his previous associations and weakness of position, yielded to the Marāthas in all matters, so that the latter had their way in everything even under the nominal suzerainty of Alivardi over the province. The change that took place in the political status of Orissā is thus clearly set forth by the Select Committee of Calcutta on 11 December 1761 :

"It is about twelve years since the Nawāb of Bengal gave the Marāthas an assignment upon the Katak province for receiving an annual stipulated sum on account of the *chauth*. The Marāthas, under pretence of collecting their share, usurped by degrees the entire possession of the province, and not contented with that, still continued to harass the neighbouring parts of Bengal, and more particularly the provinces (*i.e.* districts) of Medinipur and Bardwan, which now belong to the Company." (Long, *Selections*, i. No. 572.) Mir

Qāsim, the only strong Nawāb after Alivardi, clung to his theoretical sovereignty over Orissā. As he wrote to the English in a letter received on 10th March 1761, "It is unjust that the Marāthas should receive the whole revenues of Katak". (*Calendar of Persian Correspondence*, i. No. 1006.) The Nawābs of Bengal, for ten years after the treaty, continued to appoint *faujdārs* at Balesar, though these officers were frequently harassed by the Marāthas.

§ 19. *Later friction between Nawab and Marathas.*

Thus, one source of friction remained open. Another was that the Marāthas could never forget that the entire *subah* of Orissā as defined in the geography of the Mughal Empire had not been ceded to them, but its northernmost district Medinipur was retained by the Nawāb, and that district was a very convenient half way house for raids into Bengal and Bihār. It, therefore, became the ambition of the Marāthas, especially after the battle of Plassey had publicly demonstrated the weakness of the Nawāb's Government, to try to seize Medinipur as their legitimate due. This brought them into conflict with the English, who had now become guardians of the Nawāb's territory.

A third cause of disagreement was the *chauth* of Bengal, twelve *lakhs* of Rupees a year. This was paid annually to the Marāthas by the Nawāb's Government up to 1758. The English, having now taken charge of the defence of Bengal, withheld the *chauth* and opened negotiations with the Court of Nāgpur for a guarantee that if the money was paid no part of the Nawāb's dominion would be troubled by a Marātha force. As that Court could give no really effective assurance, the *chauth* was not paid for some years after. This led to angry diplomatic protests and threats of invasion on the part of the Marāthas, and even a few incursions into the Medinipur and Bardwān districts during the interregnum between the downfall of the Nawāb's independence and the open assumption of the Government of Bengal and Bihār by the English.

Alivardi had made the treaty of 1751 with the Marāthas in the hope of giving peace and security to his subjects, but it did not immediately put an end to their misery. In the very year that the treaty was signed, the rice crop of Bengal totally perished in consequence of the failure of rain, and a terrible famine desolated the country. The French factory at Chandarnagar had great difficulty in procuring rice for their ocean-going ships. (*Correspondance du Conseil de Chander-*

nagor avec divers, ii. 435.) True, all large scale invasions of Bengal and Bihār ceased, but Orissā remained the prey of roving bands of Marāthas, under no control of their king. Thus, in January 1753 we find the weavers at Balesar complaining of the great scarcity of rice and provisions of all kinds occasioned by the devastations of the Marāthas, who, six hundred in number, after plundering Balesar had gone to the Nilgiri hills. (Long, *Selections,* i. No. 110, *Bengal Consult.* 1 Feb. 1753.)

Interference from the Peshwā's side in the Marātha claims on Bengal aggravated Raghuji Bhonslé's difficulties towards the end of his life. On 21 January 1754 (?) he writes to Sadāshiv Rāo Bhāo: "Raghunāth Rāo has sent his envoy from Hastināpur to Bengal, with a letter for Nawāb Alivardi Khan, asking him to send the *chauth* of Bengal for (the last) three years to him. Hence, he is quarrelling in my jurisdiction. You yourself settled the peace regarding Bengal, and yet his *wakil* has gone and disturbed my administration. Please write to forbid him and also tell Alivardi to act in the terms of the treaty signed." [*S. P. D.* xx. 77.] Raghuji died on 14 Feb. 1755, and not as Grant Duff (ii. 74) asserts in March 1753. Jānoji succeeded him, but the royal

house of Nāgpur soon fell into extreme poverty. (*S. P. D.*, xx. 80, 103 and 104.)

When the *chauth* began to fall into arrears from 1759, the Bardwān and Nadiā districts were again overrun by the Marāthas, and revenue collection by the English officers and the Bardwān Rājah's agents alike was stopped.

Sheo Bhat Sathé, the Marātha governor of Orissā, was a man of restless enterprise and daring ambition. In December 1760, he burst into Bengal and made a dash towards Mungir, passing through the Bardwān and Birbhum districts, the Rājahs of which were suspected of having joined him. This flying column could not go further nor stay there long in fear of the English. Falling back on Medinipur, Sheo Bhat invested Mr. John Johnstone, the English collector of the place, on 22nd January 1761. Johnstone and his sepoys were hard pressed; but the Calcutta Council sent a relieving force with two guns, which promptly arrived on the scene (*c.* 7th February) and the Marāthas immediately decamped, without fighting, towards Katak. Foiled in the field, Sheo Bhat from Katak continued to write letters to Calcutta claiming the *chauth* of Medinipur, which he declared to be a part of the province of Orissā, and urging the withdrawal of the British troops from that town. In April and again in May, the

Katak governor threatened invasion if the *chauth* of Bengal was not forwarded to him at once.* The English replied that the Nawāb was writing directly to Jānoji on the subject. (*Calendar P.C.*, i. Nos. 1024, 1082, 1099, 1169, 1109, 1189. Long, *Selections*, i. 552.) The threat was repeated next year in a letter from Sheo Bhat received on 16th February 1762. (*Calendar* i. 1445.) But the Bengal Government was now negotiating with the Court of Nāgpur, and a Marātha envoy Govind Rao Chitnavis arrived at Calcutta early in July to settle the question of *chauth*. Jānoji was distressed by not receiving the twelve *lakhs* annually from Bengal, and he wrote strongly urging immediate payment. (*Ibid.* 1561, 1536.)

§ 20. *The English negotiate with Bhonsle for acquiring Orissa.*

But at this time the friction between the English Company and Nawāb Mir Qāsim began to assume a serious form, and it culminated in war in June 1763. The English, therefore, found it

* In a letter to the Company, received in Calcutta on 5th Oct. 1764, Bhavani Pandit, the *diwan* of Orissa, speaks of having received a letter from Janoji stating, "In the time of the former Nawab, the negotiations concerning the *chauth* were never brought to an issue without the approach of an army." (Long, *Selec.* No. 724.)

necessary to secure the neutrality of Jānoji by all means. The Calcutta Council wrote to him "asking him to consider them as security for the *chauth* of Bengal and not to assist Mir Qāsim or to distress Mir Jafar. On account of these letters Jānoji refused the bills and money sent by Mir Qāsim, nor did he grant him an asylum in the *subah* of Katak, which the ex-Nawāb desired." (*C. Pers. Corr.* ii. 77.) Evidently some *chauth* was paid at this time, and then withheld, for Jānoji in his letter (received at Calcutta on 17th Feb. 1767) complains that "more than two years have passed without any money being sent to me." This refusal of the English to make a definite settlement of the *chauth* of Bengal and their trick in spinning out for eight years their negotiations for a treaty of friendship with him (as he complained to his envoy Gopālpuri, Gosāin, whose report was received at Calcutta on 16th Oct. 1767, *Calend.* ii. 1154), exasperated Jānoji. But he was weakened by internal dissensions in the Marātha State and too afraid of the all-conquering English army to risk a war in assertion of his treaty rights.

In March 1768 Ganesh Shambhāji, "a man of great knowledge, perfectly polite in his manners" and amicable to the English, came as *subahdār* of Orissā. (*Calend.* ii. 892, 1027.)

The new Chief of Katak, as in duty bound, began to demand the *chauth* from the English as a treaty obligation. But his efforts met with no more success than those of his rougher predecessor. This needs explanation.

Not only had Orissā been an *annexe* to the *subah* of Bengal almost ever since its incorporation in the Mughal Empire under Akbar, but geography and the needs of territorial defence had decreed the union of the two. This need became all the stronger when the English secured possession of Bengal and the Madras Coast (the Northern Circars), with a foreign territory like Orissā severing the natural connection between the two. The military and political danger of this situation was apparent to the English from the very outset.

Lord Clive during his second governorship opened negotiations with Jānoji for the cession of Orissā to the Company, on condition that the Company paid half the three years' arrears of *chauth* down and the other half as soon as the Marāthas would vacate the province, the English at the same time guaranteeing the regular payment of *chauth* (12 *lakhs*) in future. But Clive's offer to Jānoji was not accepted, and the scheme was dropped, though the English continued to

cultivate the friendship of the house of Nāgpur, especially under Warren Hastings.

Lord Cornwallis was so impressed by the value of Orissā to the Company "in its rendering the communication complete between Bengal and our dominions in the Karnātak" that he authorised C. W. Malet, the British envoy at the Marātha Court, to try to obtain this province in exchange for some other British territory with a money compensation for the difference in value between the two. To induce the Marāthas to give up the holy city of Jagannāth, he authorised Malet to agree to "grant particular privileges or even exemption from all Government duties to Marātha subjects on pilgrimage to Benāres, Gayā, and Allahabad, and to Jagannāth when surrendered to us." He even offered to furnish Malet "with the means of making very liberal presents in money, to any of the (Marātha) ministers who should give a decisive assistance in forwarding the accomplishment of the object in question". Ultimately Lord Cornwallis realised that it was "absolutely impossible ever to obtain Katak directly from the Bhonslé family by any other means than by force," and his negotiations, like Clive's before him, fell through. (Ross, *Cornwallis Corres*. i. 366, 411, 453.) That force it was left to Wellesley to apply.

§ 21. *Harm done by Maratha raids.*

The treaty made by Alivardi with the Marāthas and his payment of *chauth* for Bengal, though it did not bring perfect or immediate peace to Bengal and Bihār, achieved one happy result. It changed the character of the Bargi raids. These were no longer organised invasions decreed by their State, supported by all its resources, and led by its recognised chiefs. Henceforth they were mere predatory incursions by bands of unruly soldiers or some local officer eager for gain on their private account, whose act the Marātha Government disavowed but was not strong enough to prevent or punish. And not only were these raids in future fewer, but their range also was limited to the south-western fringe area of Bengal, namely the country west of Medinipur and south of Bardwān, which as late as 1775 was still marked "Impenetrable" in Rennell's survey map. Considerable harm, however, could be done even by such bands of Marātha soldiers gone out of control and acting as marauders. Warren Hastings* makes this clear.

In proportion as the strength of the house of Nāgpur decayed through internal discord, lack of

* Despatch on the Negotiations of 1781, dated 30 April, 1781, Forrest (London ed.) ii. 259.

far-sighted statesmanship, and incapacity in the rulers, the power of the English increased through their successive triumphs in many a distant quarter of India. So great was the prestige of British arms and British statesmanship even in provinces untraversed by a single British soldier, that no Indian power except Tipu Sultān would willingly provoke an encounter with them. Hence, the most potent cause of the final release of these provinces from the long-drawn agony of Marātha incursions was the recognition of British paramountcy, in fact if not in theory, by the Indian potentates, and the first fruit of that paramountcy, namely *Pax Britannica,* which alone has made the birth of a new India possible.

CHAPTER V.

THE PANJAB DOWN TO 1748; FIRST INVASION OF AHMAD ABDALI.

§ 1. *Rise of independent dynasties in the provinces.*

The dismemberment of the Mughal Empire was immediately preceded in each of its lost provinces by the exceptionally long rule of some exceptionally capable viceroy, who completed his work by founding a dynasty and transmitting his power to his own family though securing outward legal sanction to this hereditary succession by means of gifts to the shadowy Emperor at Delhi. These men formed a striking contrast to the early short term *subahdārs* who were never permitted to govern a province for more than four years in the times when the Pādishāh was a real power in the land.

In Bengal it was Murshid Quli Khān, (surnamed Jafar Khān Nasiri, Nāsir Jang, Mutaman-ul-mulk), who ruled the province without a break from 1707 to his death in 1727 and left a throne to his son-in-law Shujā Khān. In the Deccan it was Nizām-ul-mulk Asaf Jāh, first

appointed to the viceroyalty in 1713, then removed, and finally reinstated in 1725 to hold that realm till his death in 1748 and to bequeathe it to his progeny. In Oudh it was Sādat Khan, appointed in 1723 and succeeded on his death (1739) by his son-in-law Safdar Jang and his line. In the Panjāb it was Saif-ud-daulah I Dilir Jang, who got the *subahdār*ship in 1713 and was succeeded in 1726 by his son Zakariyā Khan (entitled Saifuddaulah II); and the latter dying in 1745 left his provinces, Lāhor and Multān, to his sons Yahiyā Khān (surnamed Zakariyā Khān II and Az-ud-daulah II) and Hayātullah Khān (surnamed Shāh-nawāz Khān and Hizbar Jang.) Saifuddaulah I thus founded a dynasty which was extinguished only when his unworthy grandsons quarrelled and failed to save their heritage from Afghān encroachment (1748.) The *subahs* of Gujrāt and Mālwa were lost to the dying Empire by foreign annexation, without the intervention of a long rule by any *subahdār*.

§ 2. *The good work of founders of dynasties.*

These founder-viceroys did immense benefit to the people whose happy lot it was to be governed by them. Being strong and capable men, they successfully enforced law and order and fostered the growth of wealth and population in their

charge. They saved their subjects not only from robbers and foreign raiders, but also from the illegal exactions of office underlings,—which the lesser *subahdārs* could not do. Thus, of Murshid Quli Khan we read, "Two days in the week he administered justice in person; and was so impartial in his decisions and rigid in their execution that no one dared to commit oppression. . . . . The regulations and orders of Murshid Quli Khan were so absolute that the most refractory trembled in his presence and his commands were implicitly obeyed." [Salimullah.]

Such, too, was the case with Asaf Jāh. His *diwān* Muhammad Hāshim Khāfi Khān [ii. 748] reports from personal knowledge: "The former *subahdār* Dāud Khān (Pani) had laid the foundation of the illegal innovation (*bidat*) of exacting *ziladāri*, amounting to nearly eighty *lakhs* of Rupees, from the *zamindārs* and *ryots* of the parganahs of subahs Khāndesh, Bālāghāt and others, for himself with the assistance and concert of the Marātha troops,—with whom he was as thick as milk and sugar. Afterwards, (on the Nizam's first coming to the Deccan) when the collectors told him about it and asked his permission to levy this cess, he altogether abolished it. Nay more, he used constantly to urge his revenue officers to write to the *āmils* of the

parganahs and *mahals* of his *jāgir* that they must remember that no *ābwāb* or cess forbidden by the Emperor should be collected even to the extent of a farthing (*dām.*) Such was this great man's compassion on the condition of the common people".

Long connection with one province also allowed the growth of personal ties between such a viceroy and his subjects and gave him the same interest in their welfare that a hereditary landlord takes in the prosperity of his tenants and which no temporary farmer of the revenue can feel. With the growth of such a family-connection with the province in their charge, these founder-viceroys came to look upon the governed as their own children. Zakariyā Khān I, when pressed by the departing Nādir Shāh to ask for a personal boon, nobly begged for the liberation of the Indians whom the ruthless conqueror was dragging away with himself to servile labour in far-off Irān. And his house rigorously enforced law and order ever since its coming to power in the Land of the Five Rivers.

§ 3. *Lawless tribes of the Panjab.*

The Panjāb had, generally speaking, enjoyed more internal peace than any other frontier province of India during the 17th century. The

visits of the Emperors Jahāngir, Shāh Jahān, Aurangzib and Bahādur Shāh I to Lāhor, their marches through this province on expeditions and journeys beyond it, the movements of large armies across the land for the wars in Central Asia, Qandahār and the Khaibar Pass, had all tended to impress the local law-breakers with a wholesome fear of the Emperor's power and respect for the Emperor's peace. The Sikh risings under *guru* Govind Singh in the 17th century and under Banda in 1710 and 1713 disturbed and desolated some well-defined zones only.

After Banda and his personal followers had been crushed in 1714, the Sikhs remained quiescent for over one generation and did not disturb the public peace. But there were other lawless classes in that province, predatory by instinct and tribal usage, who were ever on the look-out for an opportunity to plunder cities and caravans and seize the rents of villages. Such were the Ranghars and the Gujars, the brethren of the hereditary Jāt robbers living further east. In the Panjāb the Jāts supplied the main body of recruits to the Sikh fraternity, but their lawless activity as Sikhs revived only after 1750.

The land of the five rivers has in our day become one vast granary with an assured if artificial water-supply, and the home of a prolific

manly but peacefully prosperous population. But in Mughal Panjāb man had not yet harnessed Nature to his service, and an infinitely smaller population than to-day's could then find a subsistence on its soil. Vast forests overspread the *doābs* or tracts enclosed by two rivers, where we now see only smiling fields of wheat and cotton, millet and oil-seeds, stretching up to the horizon, broken by rapidly rising cities, the homes of industry and arts. And these jungles afforded safe homes and ready refuges to robber bands. One jungle covered the country from Karnāl (70 miles north of Delhi) to Ludhiāna near the Satlaj as late as 1803. The town of Sarhind was no doubt a centre of population and tillage, but beyond a narrow belt of clearance around it the forest reigned supreme. So, too, after crossing the Satlaj into the Jālandar doāb. Further south the state of things was still worse. A Panjābi Hindu, writing in 1695, thus describes the land: "The *sarkār* of Dipālpur (the modern Montgomery district) is the home of the Wattu, Dogar and Gujar tribes, who are notorious for their turbulent and rebellious character. Every year the floods overspread the land far and wide, and when the water subsides so many jungles spring up all over this country owing to the great moisture, that a pedestrian has great difficulty in

travelling. How then can a rider? It is called the *Lakhi Jangal* (forest of a hundred thousand trees.) The wicked men of this plain, owing to the shelter afforded by the impassable jungle,—which stretches over leagues in length and breadth,—become ambuscaders, highwaymen and thieves. The hand of the imperial commanders cannot reach them for chastisement." (*Khulāsat-ut-tawārikh* of Sujān Rāi.)

A strong man was needed to keep such a province in order, and that strong man was found in the person of Abdus Samad Khān.

§ 4. *Law and order enforced by Abdus Samad Khan.*

Abdus Samad Khān, a Turki immigrant from Samarqand (Ahrār) and a near kinsman of Nizām-ul-mulk and Itimād-ud-daula I., was created a 5-*hazāri*, with the title of Dilir Jang and appointed *subahdār* of Lāhor in 1713. His first great achievement was the crushing of the Sikh rising under Banda in 1714, for which he was rewarded by promotion to the rank of a 7-*hazāri* and the title of Saif-ud-daulah. Next, in 1718, he destroyed, after a severe contest, Isā Khān, a petty landowner of the Ranghar tribe, who had raised himself to almost princely power and dignity by successful highway robbery. This

man's grandfather had laid the foundation of power and wealth by collecting and leading a robber-band. Isā Khān himself, on the strength of this heritage, was courted as a man of consequence. Joining Prince Muizz-ud-din before the battle of Jājau, he was enrolled as a *mansabdār*. Then, in the contest fought out between the four brothers at Lāhor in 1712 he was on the winning side and vastly enriched himself by seizing the treasure-laden carts of the other princes. His patron, on gaining the throne, made him a 5-*hazāri* and the *faujdār* of Lakhi jungle. On the fall of Jahāndār Shāh in 1713, he fought for his own hand, plundered and occupied the neighbouring district, defeating the local faujdārs, robbed the trade caravans between Delhi and Lāhor, and thus amassed a vast hoard of wealth and jewels. At the same time he was cunning enough to bribe the Emperor's favourite Samsām-ud-daulah (Khān-i-Daurān) and make him his patron at Court. Emboldened by this high protection, "he looted the people worse than before. The imperial officers who had been assigned jāgirs in this region, could not get a penny from their villages as the rents were forcibly collected by Isā Khān. He dominated the country from the bank of the Biās,—where he had built a fort named Darisā—to the village of Thāra on the bank of the Satlaj,

in the Sarhind district, and through fear of him the tiger used to draw its claws back." (*Māsir-ul-umārā,* ii. 825-828, following Khāfi Khān, ii. 767-768.)

Abdus Samad Khān, in 1718, sent his subordinate Shāhdād Khān Kheshgi, to root the rebel out. The decisive battle took place near the village of Thāra, the seat of Isā Khān, who fought bravely at the head of 3,000 horse, slew many of the imperialists, and even forced Shāhdād to turn his back. But just then, Isā Khān's father having been shot dead, he was maddened by rage, and drove his elephant with blind impetuosity on that of Shāhdād, with the result that he was killed and his victory turned into a rout. His son took to a peaceful life and was left to enjoy his zamindari. Shortly after this campaign, the *subahdār* fought and slew another turbulent rebel, Husain Khān Kheshgi of Qasur.

§ 5. *Zakariyā Khān, governor of the Panjāb.*

Saifuddaulah I was a patron of the immigrants from Trans-oxiana and settled many of these Turks in the Panjāb by granting them lands and posts in the provincial army. In 1726 he was replaced by his son Zakariyā Khān, created Azuddaulah I Hizbar Jang. In 1739 the latter's

charge was enlarged by the addition of Multān, and he was, on Nādir Shāh's recommendation, promoted to be a 8-*hazāri* with the title of Saif-ud-daulah II. He had married a daughter of the wazir Itimād-ud-daulah I., while his eldest son Yahiyā Khān was married to a daughter of that wazir's son Itimād-ud-daulah II. Zakariyā Khān was a very strong and just ruler, vigilant in supervising the administration and protecting the people from oppression,—for which his fame spread throughout the land and he was idolised by his subjects in a degree unequalled in that age. He continued his father's good work of putting down the brigand chiefs who used to disturb the country, such as Panāh Bhātti, the terror of the tract from Hasan Abdāl to the bank of the Rāvi, and Mir Mār, whose hunting ground was the *doāb* between the Rāvi and the Satlaj.

Zakariyā Khān's crowning act of nobleness was done for the relief of humble sufferers who had none else to befriend them and who could not do him any benefit in return. Nādir Shāh greatly loved him, and when passing by Lāhor on his withdrawal from India he pressed Zakariyā Khān to ask for a personal favour, but the only boon that he asked of the world-conqueror was the liberation of the artisans and other people of Delhi whom Nādir was dragging away with him

to Persia. Nādir agreed, and thousands of Indian homes, far away from the Panjāb were rendered happy by this nobleman's unselfish generosity. [*M. U.* ii. 106.]

After promoting the peace and prosperity of the province entrusted to his care, Zakariyā Khān died on 1st July 1745. "There was so much grief for him among all people, especially in the city of Lāhor, that for three nights in succession no lamp was lighted in any house. Thousands on thousands followed his bier through the streets, lamenting aloud, beating their breasts, and heaping up flowers on his bier, till at last not a handful of flowers was left in the city." (Anandrām, 139.) Zakariyā Khān had scattered plenty over a smiling land and read his history in a grateful nation's eyes. There cannot be a nobler monument to a governor than this.

With him ended the happiness of the Panjāb. Zakariyā Khān I left behind him three sons: Yahiyā Khan (surnamed Az-ud-daulah II), Hayātullah Khān (surnamed Hizbar Jang II and Shāh-nawāz Khān), and Mir Bāqi. Yahiyā was a weak effeminate youth, while Hayātullah, a particular favourite of Nādir Shāh, seems to have derived from his dread patron a bloodthirsty oppressive and grasping character. [Ashub, ii. 452.] Soon after their father's death, the two

elder brothers returned from Delhi to Lāhor, when Hayātullah demanded a partition of their patrimony. A settlement was delayed and the armed retainers on the two sides came to blows with each other. At last terms were arranged and Hayātullah,, on receiving a certain amount in cash and jewels by way of payment, withdrew to his *faujdāri* in the Jālandar doāb.

But this did not bring peace to the Panjāb. The Emperor foolishly put off appointing a governor for that province. He rejected the wazir's suggestion of giving Zakariyā Khān's two provinces of Lāhor and Multān to his two sons, as likely to create a hereditary Turāni dominion there. Many emigrants from Central Asia had settled in and around Lāhor under the patronage of the last two viceroys and had built there houses, tombs and gardens, so that "the place had become a home of Mughals like Balkh and Bukhārā." At last the wazir tried to save these fellow-tribesmen by begging the *subahdāri* of the province for himself. No more unwise arrangement could have been devised for the most important frontier province of India than an absentee and vicarious governorship. As the wazir's deputy, however, Mir Mumin Khān, who had been Zakariyā Khan's 'man of business', was appointed, which was an

excellent selection. The wazir himself could not pay a single visit to his province.

All these circumstances conspired "to destroy the peace and prosperity which the just rule of Zakariyā Khān had given to the Panjāb. . . . Disorder broke out. Everywhere lawless men, plunderers and adventurers, who had so long kept themselves in hiding, now came out of their holes and began to desolate the realm. . . . On one side the Rājah of Jammu rebelled, and on the other the Sikhs began to cause tumult and trouble." (Anandrām, 289.) The first deputy governor, Mir Mumin, had not the means of suppressing these disorders. At last, after long persuasion, the Emperor in 1746 agreed to appoint Yahiyā Khān as deputy governor, while the wazir continued as the titular subahdar.

§ 6. *Civil War between Zakariyā's sons.*

Yahiyā retained Mir Mumin as his chief officer, but his own soft character made it impossible for him to govern such a turbulent province. To add to his difficulties, his younger brother Hayātullah came to Lāhor on 21st November 1746, entered his mansion outside the city and called upon Yahiyā to make a complete division of their father's property. The discussion was prolonged, no settlement was made,

and the soldiers of the two brothers often fought in the streets, while each of them stood behind his entrenchments in his own quarter of the city. At last Hayātullah's patience was worn out; his soldiers clamoured for the arrears of their salary which he had no means of satisfying. So, on 17th March 1747, at about 3 o'clock in the afternoon he ordered his lieutenant Adina Beg Khān to reconnoitre his brother's trenches. This move drew Mir Mumin out in force and a light and indecisive skirmish ensued, after which each side retired to its shelter. Next day, Hayātullah in person delivered a sudden assault; the portable artillery which he carried in front quickly scattered his enemies, and Mir Mumin was captured wounded. Lāhor could not hold out against the victor, because Yahiyā's fugitive soldiers flocked into the city and mutinied for their pay, which was four or five months overdue. Hayātullah entered Lāhor unopposed (21st March) and seized the property of Yahiyā, who took refuge in the house of his widowed aunt. [Anandrām, 289-292, 304.]

After thus usurping the government of Lāhor, Hayātullah assured his position by removing from their posts all the old captains "who had grown grey haired in the service of his father and grandfather" and confiscating their

houses and property. He then sent his steward to the Emperor with some presents, begging pardon for his acts and requesting that he might be appointed deputy governor of the province under the wazir's seal! The envoy arrived at Delhi with this strange letter on 3rd September and opened negotiations which the Emperor's advisers considered it politic to draw out. [Anandrām, 293-295, 300.]

In the meantime the political horizon of India was overcast and a great danger arose to threaten the throne of Delhi. Nādir Shāh had been murdered on 9th June 1747 and much of his wealth and soldiery had passed into the hands of Ahmad Khān Abdāli, his favourite general. Abdāli had crowned himself king on his way from Nādir's camp to Qandahār (about 12th June) and laid claim to the heritage of Nādir. His immediate aim was to equip himself with the necessary funds by squeezing that wellknown milch-cow India. And for this a fine opportunity presented itself immediately.

The civil war between Yahiyā and Hayāt-ullah rent the government of the Panjāb into two, and made that province too weak to resist a foreign invader. In addition to this, Hayātullah who knew that he had hopelessly broken with his Delhi master by ousting the Emperor's lawful

representative and the wazir's son-in-law, looked round for an ally outside India and sent a letter inviting Ahmad Abdāli to come and take the sovereignty of the land. He also embraced the Shia religion, replacing the names of the Timurid Emperors on his official seal by the names of the twelve Imāms. He thus hoped to find allies among the Shia soldiery of Persia. [Ashub, ii. 453, *Bayān*, 221.]

§ 7. *Last years and death of Nadir Shah.*

After his conquest of Delhi, Nādir Shāh annexed the *subah* of Kābul and all the portions of the Panjāb and Sindh lying west of the Indus river down to the sea, as well as the province of Tatta or lower Sindh and the ports situated in it. In addition, he received in perpetual assignment the revenue of the four cis-Indus *mahals* of Sialkot, Gujrāt, Aurangābād, and Pasrur, which had hitherto been reserved for feeding the Mughal administration of the perpetually deficit province of Afghanistan. (Anandrām, 80-81, *Siyar*, iii. 30 and ii. 97.) The Emperor's governor of Lāhor signed an agreement to send Nādir twenty *lakhs* of Rupees every year on account of these four *mahals*.

Thereafter the Court of Delhi enjoyed peace and protection from the side of Persia. Nādir

was a great admirer of Timur; he used to carry Timur's autobiography with himself on his campaigns, and he had not the heart to ruin Timur's lineal descendant in India. During the remainder of his life the great Persian conqueror kept up friendly relations with Muhammad Shāh. In the midst of his busy life and arduous campaigns in many a distant land, he did not forget to send presents to the Emperor of Delhi. Thus, 110 mule-loads of melons, grapes and apples were received in December 1740, and 81 Iraqi horses for the Emperor with several others for the leading nobles of his Court arrived at Delhi in May 1746. Muhammad Shāh, in return, sent Nādir 25 *lakhs* of Rupees in December 1740, and 51 healthy young elephants in June 1746. (Anandram, 121 and 168, 115 and 170.)

The conquest of Delhi was followed by incessant campaigns which shook almost every country of western and central Asia. In the course of these, Nādir's character underwent a rapid decline. He became a fierce tyrant, revelling in wanton bloodshed and cruelty, giving vent to frequent outbursts of fury and insane suspiciousness. A deep melancholy and loss of confidence in his people and officers settled on him, which made him harsh in his attitude towards them. The failure of his Dāghestān campaigns

(1742 and 1744) broke the spell of his invincibility. Rebellions henceforth broke out in many parts of his empire; everywhere the rebels set up pretenders to the local thrones and killed the loyal officers of Nādir.

His treasury having been exhausted by his ceaseless warfare, Nādir now resorted to the cruellest extortion to fill his coffers. Many of his revenue collectors perished under torture to make them yield more and more money. All wealthy subjects lived in dread of their lives. "These rebellions only increased the violence of his temper, and his acts became even more wild", as his secretary admits. People were put to death, mutilated or blinded on the merest suspicion. On the plain outside Isfahān, he burnt alive some Hindus Muslims and Armenians. When in January 1747 he set out from his capital for Khurāsān, in every province that he passed through, he built towers of human heads after killing local nobles and commons. Each rebellion was suppressed with ferocious cruelty, but a new one soon broke out in another quarter. In short, "the last years of Nādir Shāh's reign were years of unspeakable misery for his subjects". [*Mujmil*, 10-40; Sykes.]

The most influential element in the popula-

tion of Persia were the Qizilbāshes (literally *Red Heads,* from their red Turkish caps.) These were the descendants of some Turkish tribes long settled in Persia and they formed the best soldiers in the East, often acting as king-makers. Nādir now began to brood over plans for destroying all the Qizilbāshes of note and influence with the aid of his Uzbak and Afghān captains, who had latterly displaced the Qizilbāshes in his trust and favour. He arranged with these foreign mercenaries to summon all the Qizilbāsh chiefs and captains to his presence next day and there massacre them, and then by a sudden attack annihilate their leaderless soldiery, giving up their property to plunder by the Uzbaks and Afghāns.

The plot, however, leaked out. The Qizilbāsh chiefs, under the leadership of the captain of the palace-guard and Muhammad Khān Qāchār, took prompt action. At midnight before the day appointed for their massacre, they started, in a body of seventy, for Nādir's tent to forestall the blow. But the terror of the great king paralysed the feet of 57 of the conspirators and they dropped off on the way. Thirteen only entered Nadir's tents and slew him. [*Mujmil,* 15-20; *Jahankusha,* 461.]

§ 8. *Rise of Ahmad Abdali.*

This tragedy took place near Kuchān at the extreme north-eastern corner of Khurāsān, on 9th June 1747. The death of Nādir Shān left the field open for Ahmad Khān Abdāli.* His ancestors had their homes in the Herāt district and belonged to the Saddu-zāi clan of Afghāns. His father and grandfather having been slain in battle, young Ahmad fled for refuge to the Ghilzāi clan in Qandahār. When Nādir Shāh captured Qandahār (in 1737), he took Ahmad into his service as a personal attendant (*yasāwwal.*) The conqueror removed the Ghilzāi clan from their home in Qandahār to Māzendrān and Khurāsān, while he shifted the Abdāli clan wholesale from Herāt and Khurāsān to the Qandahār district, which henceforth became the land of the Abdālis.

In the service of Nādir Shāh, Ahmad Abdāli greatly distinguished himself and rose to be the chief commander of that king's Abdāli contingent (some six thousand strong.) Nādir used often

* An ancestor of Āhmad Shāh was a disciple of the saint Khwājah Ābu Āhmad Ābdāl of the Chishti order, and so pleased his master by his devotion that the holy man blessed him and called him *Abdāl*, a word which means a man free from earthly bonds by reason of his close communion with God. The conqueror Āhmad Shah took the title of *Durr-i-durrāni* or 'Pearl among Pears'; and hence his dynasty is also called *Durrāni* [*Husain Shāhi*, 6.]

to say in open Court, "I have not found in Irān Turān or Hind any man equal to Ahmad Abdāli in capacity and character." There is a charming legend that one day Nādir Shāh was enjoying the breeze seated on his golden throne and Ahmad was standing before him at a respectful distance, when the king cried out, "O Ahmad Abdāli! come forward." Ahmad approached, but Nādir said, "Come closer still." When Ahmad had come up, Nādir told him, "O Ahmad Khān Abdāli, remember that after me the kingship will pass on to you. You must treat Nādir's family kindly". Ahmad replied in alarm, "May I be your sacrifice! If you wish to slay me, I am present here. But there is no reason why you should utter such (unfortunate) words as these." Nādir repeated, "I know for certain that you will become an Emperor. Treat Nādir's descendants well". The historian Husain adds that Ahmad Shāh in his days of power was always mindful of his late master's appeal and assisted Shāhrukh Mirzā, the grandson and successor of Nādir. [*Husain Shāhi*, 14-15.]*

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* *TAh.*, 3*b*, has a marginal addition :—"This Āhmad at first served Nādir Shāh as his pipe-bearer, and was one day sitting down outside the lattice-door near the *Diwan-i-am* of Delhi fort where Nādir was then in residence, when Nizām-ul-mulk Āsaf Jāh, who knew the art of reading a man's future from his face, looked at him and predicted that he would become an Emperor. On this

After murdering Nādir at midnight, the Qizilbāsh conspirators planned to keep the fact a secret from the rest of the army till next morning, in order to attack his favoured Afghān troops by surprise, crush them and plunder their camp, and then seize all the property of the late king without a sharer. But so great a secret could not be kept. Ahmad heard of it before morning, stood on his defence during the rest of the night, and early next morning marched in battle array towards Nādir's tent. There he found the Qizilbāsh soldiers and camp-followers engaged in indiscriminate plunder. The Uzbak and Afghān contingents at once plunged into the game and "in four hours from the dawn no trace remained on the ground of the tents and property of Nādir Shāh. Everything had been dispersed and had disappeared". [*Mujmil,* 20-21; *Jahānkushā* 461.]

The Afghān soldiers, seeing their patron dead and themselves surrounded by hostile rivals in a foreign land, marched away rapidly from Kuchān in a compact body for self-defence against any Qizilbāsh attack. At the end of the third day, they halted and held a council. Their captains

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speech being reported to Nādir, he, knowing the Nizām's powers as a soothsayer, cut off both ears of Āhmad with his dagger, remarking, 'When you become Emperor, this will remind people of me.' "!!!

said among themselves, "On the long journey before us we need a man whose commands all shall obey. It would be difficult, nay impossible, for us to reach Qandahār with the entire body of our women children and servants, in the face of the hostility of the Persians, unless we have a supreme chief. We must obey such a leader with all our power, whatever happens." All the Abdālis took this view and chose Ahmād as their commander, hailing him as *Ahmad Shāh.* (*Mujmil,* 74.)

Spiritual blessing was also secured by the new king. Three days before the murder of Nādir, Ahmad had met on the way a *darvish* from Lāhor named Shāh Muhammad Sābir,* who had prophesied to him, "On your forehead I read the marks of royalty." The holy man then proved his supernatural powers by a miracle. After the death of Nādir, Ahmad did not forget to take the saint with him in his flight. At the first halt the *darvish* pressed Ahmad to make himself king. The Khān pleaded his incompetence and lack of materials befitting royal grandeur. But the holy man was not to be so put off. Piling up a small mound of earth, he seized Ahmad's hand and seated him on it saying, "This is your throne".

* Shāh Sābir was the grandson of Ustā Halālkhor, a well-known farrier of Kābul, adored by the Turānis as a *darvish.* (*Siyar,* iii. 16.)

Then strewing some barley-shoots on his head, he declared them the aigrette on his crown and styled him *Durrāni Pādishāh*, or 'Pearl among kings'. [*Siyar*, iii. 16; *Husain Shāhi*, 17-18, 20; *Bayān*, 225; *Mujmil*, 74.]

§ 9. *Ahmad Abdali gains Qandahar and Kabul.*

Arrived at Qandahār, Ahmad published the news of Nādir Shāh's death. The Ghilzāi Afghān whom the Persian king had left as his governor in this fort, plotted to kill Ahmad by treachery. But the blow was anticipated. Abdāli killed the leading conspirators and took possession of Qandahār, where he crowned himself with full pomp and struck coins in his own name. (*Mujmil*, 75; *Siyar*, iii. 16.)

The Afghān tribesmen flocked to Ahmad Abdāli's standards in the hope of finding a national hero who would lead them on to a career of successful rapine as in the days of Sultān Mahmud of Ghazni. The various bodies of Nādir's soldiers scattered in different places in the Panjāb and Afghānistān were drawn together by Taqi Khān Shirāzi (Beglar-Begi) and induced to enter Abdāli's service. In these ways a band of 40,000 hardy warriors (only a minority of them being Qizilbāshes) soon gathered under Ahmad.

He then looked out for money to maintain them and found it very soon.

After arranging for the administration of Qandahār and taking oaths of allegiance from all the Abdāli tribesmen, Ahmad set out to conquer the provinces of Afghanistan from Nādir's officers. He first took possession of Ghazni after some fighting and installed his own governor there. Nāsir Khan, a hereditary servant of the Delhi empire, had been forced by Nādir Shāh to continue as his governor of Afghanistan when that country was ceded to Persia by the treaty of 1739. In May 1747 he had left Kābul for Khurāsān at Nādir's call to deliver the accumulated revenue of Kābul, Peshāwar and Sindh, amounting to 30 lakhs of Rupees. When he reached the neighbourhood of Qandahār, the news of Nādir's murder had already spread abroad, and this treasure was looted and divided among themselves by some neighbouring tribal chiefs. But soon afterwards Ahmad arrived there, arrested these chieftains and forced them to disgorge the money.

Abdāli sent Nāsir Khān back to Kābul to act as governor on his behalf, but Nāsir's heart was averse to this service, and he left Kābul for Peshāwar (his winter headquarters) in order to be within easy reach of Delhi. Abdāli then advanced

north and took unopposed possession of Kābul, from which Nāsir's deputy had fled away.

Ever since his accession to the throne, Ahmad Abdāli had been issuing invitations to the Afghān clans all over the country to join him and help to recover the lost sovereignty and empire of their race. Many of these tribal chiefs flocked to his standard to share in the alluring career of plunder under such a born general and national leader. From Kābul Ahmad sent an advanced detachment to occupy Peshāwar and plunder the country up to Attock on the Indus. At the news of the invaders' approach, Nāsir Khān evacuated Peshāwar, crossed the river and took refuge in the land of Chach Hazāra; but he was driven out of this district by another Afghān force under Ahmad's commander-in-chief Sardār-i-Jahān, and fled to Lāhor (Nov.) giving up all his property to plunder.

Abdāli now established his own rule in Peshāwar, which city served as a very convenient starting point for the invasion of Hindustan, with the man-power of Afghanistan behind him and no great physical obstacle in front. The Khaibar Afghans quickly gathered round him and a plan of invasion was matured. [Anand, 300-302; *Siyar*, iii. 16-17; *Bayān*, 224.]

§ 10. *Abdali invades the Panjab and captures Lahor.*

Meantime, at the news of Abdāli's march towards Peshāwar, Hayātullah had issued from Lāhor and taken up an entrenched position on the bank of the Rāvi, appealing to the Emperor to send him reinforcements, which never came.

Leaving Peshāwar about the middle of December 1747, Ahmad Abdāli crossed the Indus by a bridge of boats, and the Jhilam and the Chināb by the same device, and arrived near Lāhor on 8th January 1748, his track being marked by a line of sacked and burning villages. Twelve thousand picked horsemen followed him, the core of them being composed of 6,000 devoted and veteran soldiers of his own clan who had accompanied him from Persia. A number of Afghān adventurers from the frontier also joined him on foot, in the hope of plundering the rich plains of India. This raised the invading force probably to 18,000 men, but they were absolutely without cannon.

Abdāli's religious guide Bābā Sābir entered Lāhor alone, avowedly to visit his mother who was living in that city, and also to make a pilgrimage to the local saints' tombs, but really to deliver to Hayātullah an invitation from Abdāli to join him. His fame as a magician had preceded him, and

people talked how his spells had turned a number of toy tents and horses into real cavalry and war equipment for Ahmad immediately after Nādir's death. It was now reported that Sābir had come to Lāhor in order to render the Mughal artillery powerless by his charms. So formidable an enemy could not be suffered to escape. He was at once arrested by order of Hayātullah, and next day put to death by a subordinate officer without the governor's knowledge. [*Bayān* 225, *Siyar* iii. 17-18, Anand 325.]

After this Abdāli could no longer think of conciliating Hayātullah. On 10th January his soldiers forded the Rāvi one by one and reached the Shālamār garden four miles east of the city. Next day they appeared in force on the plain of Shāh Balādil and the hermitage of Shāh Husain. The advanced posts of the defenders were two, the small fort of Hazrat Ishān held by Hayātullah's pay-master and an entrenchment close to the hermitage of Shāh Balādil (in the Parvizābād suburb)* commanded by Mirzā Asmatullah and Lāchin Beg. These two divisions, totalling

* *Hazrat Ishān* is the saint Miān Mir. The fighting took place in the tract east of old Lahor which is thus described in the *Lahore Dist. Gazetteer* (ed. 1883), p. 149: "From the city walls to Shālamār Miān Mir and Ichra—a circle with a radius of some three or four miles—the ground is strewn with débris interspersed with crumbling mosques, tombs, gateways and gigantic mounds."

16,000 men, now issued to the plain to meet the enemy. The Afghāns sent out only a thousand mounted musketeers, who galloped up to the Mughals, fired their pieces, and as quickly rode back beyond range. The battle raged in this manner till evening, neither side being able to make an advance from its position. About sunset, the Indian troops, regarding the fighting as over for the day, set out to return to their trenches in the careless disorder that usually marks their retirement, when the Afghān horsemen delivered a sudden attack, charging them at full speed and firing such sharp volleys from their muskets that the imperialists were completely taken by surprise and driven off the field in hopeless rout. The paymaster and other captains, without making any attempt to rally their men in the redoubt or the trenches, fled at once to the shelter of the walled city. Adina Beg alone stood outside the city during the first quarter of the night, firing his guns to keep the exultant Afghāns back from advancing nearer than the Hazrat Ishān. Then he came back to his master and reported the situation. Hayātullah found Lāhor untenable and fled away from the city at midnight,* and his

* *Siyar*, 18, ascribes the defeat to the inaction of Adina Beg who did not support the *bakhshi* in the attempt to expel the Afghans from the trenches, and his cowardice in retreating to the

officers and soldiers followed his example, each man only thinking how to save himself.

The rich capital of the Panjāb lay utterly undefended. Next morning (12th January) Mir Mumin and other faithful officers of the late Zakariyā Khān, who had been kept in confinement by Hayātullah, went on a mission of entreaty to Abdāli's tent. For a ransom of 30 *lakhs* of Rupees, the Afghān victor agreed to spare the city from a sack, and sent his provosts to keep his soldiers back from entering Lāhor. A good deal of plunder, however, unavoidably took place in the collapse of all government.

The capture of Lāhor more than doubled the strength of Ahmad. Not only did he gain immense wealth in the form of the city's ransom (Rs. 22 lakhs immediately paid) and the property of the governor and his family, but he was thus enabled to equip himself with all the imperial artillery and military stores in the fort, of which he had brought none from Peshāwar. Further,

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city in broad daylight. *TAh.*, 4*b*, passes over the whole fight, merely stating that Hayatullah sent a force under Jumla Kh. Afghan of Qasur, who instead of opposing the Abdāli went over to him, and so Hayatullah being unable to fight fled away. I follow Anandram, a resident of Lahor.

This Jumla Kh. was left by Abdāli in Lahor as his governor when marching to Sarhind. [Anand, 332.]

he seized all the horses and camels that he could find in and near Lāhor, mounted his Afghān foot-men on the horses and his swivel-guns on the camels, and in this way added five or six thousand hardy men to his mobile division, with a good number of rapidly portable light artillery.

Thus completing his preparations and feeling confident that he could now face the regular army of Delhi on equal terms, he started from Lāhor on 19th February, at the head of 12,000 men, leaving his own governor in that city, and marching eastwards to Sarhind on the road to Delhi. [Anand., 312, 325-332; *Bayan* 227; *Siyar*, iii. 17-18; *Husain Shāhi*, 25.]

§ 11. *Slackness and indecision of Delhi Court.*

Let us now see what the imperial Government had been doing in the meantime in the face of this terrible danger. The Emperor had received many and early warnings of the coming invasion, but infatuation had seized his Court, and even the fresh memory of the loss and humiliation suffered in consequence of Nādir's invasion could not awaken any of his officers to a sense of their duty and the needs of the situation. Irresolution, conflict of counsel, procrastination and inertia now marked the measures of the Delhi Government to

an even more shameful extent than when the Persian conqueror was threatening it.

As early as 1st September 1747, Muhammad Shāh had received from Amir Beg (Nāsir Khan's deputy at Kābul) the copy of a proclamation issued by Abdāli on 15th July, appointing Muhammad Hāshim Afridi the chieftain ("mālik and grey-beard") of all the Afridi tribesmen in the Peshāwar district. (Anandrām, 298.) About the middle of November followed the report of Abdāli's occupation of Kābul and of the appearance of a detachment of his troops near Attock, oppressing and plundering the entire district. Close on its heels came the news of the invader's capture of Peshāwar and the flight of Nāsir Khān to Lāhor.

The situation which resulted at Lāhor from Hayātullah's usurpation of its government put the imperial Court into the greatest perplexity. The usurper held the lawful deputy governor Yahiyā Khān in his hands, and the despatch of a force from the capital to oust him might drive him to kill his captive, who was also a son-in-law of the wazir. Therefore, by the wazir's advice the Emperor had temporised with Hayātullah, sent him smooth messages, and even held protracted parleys with the envoy sent by the rebel to Delhi to negotiate for the grant of the *subahdāri* to him. The situation was made more critical by Abdāli's

conquest of Qandahār and Kābul, which naturally raised the fear that if he invaded India the least sign of disfavour at the Delhi Court would drive Hayātullah into the arms of the invader. Therefore, the Delhi Government, instead of boldly facing the danger and crushing the rebel at Lāhor by a prompt and vigorous attack, found wisdom in doing nothing but talking indecisively and letting matters drift.

Even when the Emperor learnt that the invaders had taken Peshāwar and their advanced troops had appeared near Attock (early in November), he did not realize the seriousness of the threat to Lāhor. True, he sent his advance tents out of Delhi one day's march towards the Panjāb on 23rd November; but he fixed a date fully three weeks later (14th December) for actually starting from his capital. He was confirmed in his blindness by the report that the Afghān raiders had gone back from Attock to Peshāwar. The news was very grateful to his indolent and weak character. He had lived in Delhi now for 28 years since his accession, without ever going more than a few miles outside his capital (except on two occasions only.) He had grown extremely ease-loving, and in addition was now suffering from the effects of the opium habit.

At this time he fell ill again and the doctors forbade him to be moved.

What was to be done to meet the danger from the north-west? On this question there was a sharp division of opinion at his Court. Seasoned captains told His Majesty that unless he led the army in person, the ease-loving soldiers of Hindustān would not face the veterans of Irān. The carpet-knights of the Court, who had never seen a battle, bragged that the Afghān upstart did not deserve the honour of the Shāhān-shāh taking the field in person against him and that any one of his nobles could bring him back a captive tied hand and foot. [*Mujmil,* 99.] The wazir, who was wiser, warned the Emperor that if he wished to achieve victory he must march out of Delhi and go at least to some place nearer to Lāhor, such a Pānipat or Karnāl, and thence send the army on under the wazir to meet the invasion. "The Emperor in speech agreed to this counsel, but he could never resolve on such action and constantly put off the date fixed for his starting." (Anandrām, 308-312.) Nothing was therefore done. Inaction is the course dearest to imbeciles.

§ 12. *Army sent from Delhi to oppose Abdali.*

On 22nd December Muhammad Shāh learnt that Abdāli had begun his march from Peshāwar

towards Lāhor with a strong force. But even then the urgency of the case was not brought home to his mind. By this time his malady had progressed too far to permit him to move, and yet he would not allow his only son, Prince Ahmad, to go in his place at the head of this expedition. So, all the State treasuries were emptied and 60 *lakhs* of Rupees were thus collected which were distributed among the nobles to enable them to equip themselves for this campaign. That aged drunkard and smooth-tongued advocate of utter inaction, the wazir Qamruddin Khān, was appointed supreme commander, with Safdar Jang (*subahdār* of Oudh), Ishwari Singh (Rājah of Jaipur and chief of the Rajput feudatories), and Nāsir Khān (late governor of Kābul) as his assistants.

Even after this, the delay made by them in moving was disgraceful. The wazir was given formal leave to depart on 8th January 1748, but he had to halt for 4 or 5 days to enable the artillery to join him. Ishwari Singh had asked for the fort of Rantambhor, which the Emperor refused, and the Rājah grew lukewarm in his zeal and put off his own march as long as he decently could.

At long last this huge army, numbering with its camp followers more than two hundred thousand souls and encumbered with heavy

artillery, began its slow and ponderous march from Delhi, halting frequently on the way. It had not yet reached Narela (16 miles north of Delhi), when the news came that Abdāli had already taken Lāhor and was raising fresh troops there. The Delhi army was overcome with terror of the enemy. The generals sent a deputation to the Emperor, begging that he should despatch his son to lead them. There was no help for it now; the Emperor agreed. Prince Ahmad started from Delhi on 31st January. Overtaking the main army near Sonpat, he quickened its pace. Karnāl was rapidly crossed (19th February) because of the bad omen of its having witnessed another foreign invader's triumph over the Delhi forces nine years earlier! Here it was learnt that Ali Muhammad Ruhela, the imperial *faujdār* of Sarhind, had deserted his station and fled to his home, Aonla in the Barily district, so that the most important outpost between Lāhor and Delhi was left without a defender. The prince, therefore, pushed on as fast as he could and arrived near Sarhind on the 25th.

The enemy had not yet been sighted nor had any news of his movements reached the imperialists. But he could not be far off. In this situation the Delhi army made an incredible blunder which can be explained only by the utter

fatuity of its chiefs and the hopeless degeneration of public life in India in that age. As a sufferer, Anandrām Mukhlis, writes, "The nobles displayed an astounding ignorance and neglect. They made no attempt to collect intelligence; they did not care to guard their communications with Delhi in the rear, nor the route for the coming of provisions to their camp, but left Sarhind in this state (of negligence.) The enemy's cavalry would have met with no obstacle on the way if it had made a dash on Delhi".

The women of the wazir's harem and all the heavy baggage, treasure, and surplus stores and carts of this huge army were left in the small fort of Sarhind with a garrison of 1,000 horse and foot under a eunuch of the wazir, while the army advanced towards the Satlaj. The straight route between Sarhind and Lāhor crosses that river at Ludhiāna, but as the water-level was lower at the ford of Machhiwārā, 22 miles above Ludhiāna, the imperial chiefs decided to make a detour *via* Machhiwārā, thus leaving the customary and shorter road far to their left. And yet they did not send any detachment to hold Ludhiāna, nor even posted scouts there to watch for the enemy's appearance. Worse than that, the advancing army immediately lost touch with its depot at

Sarhind, as it did not care to maintain a lengthening chain of outposts from that base to itself.

As against such incredible infatuation and military incompetence, the enemy displayed unusual alertness and activity. Abdāli's force consisted of about twelve thousand* mounted men, without heavy artillery, but extremely mobile and armed with nearly a thousand light pieces (swivels, *jizail*) placed on camels which could move as fast as the cavalry. In addition, the ruthless vigour of this veteran lieutenant of the Persian Napoleon maintained strict secrecy about his movements. "Abdāli had ordered his troops to slay every Indian whom they might find in their camp or in the plains, so that not a single spy of the wazir or of any other noble who went out to scout returned alive". (*Mujmil,* 101.) Thus, quite in the dark about the enemy's position and intentions, the doomed Indian army marched out of Sarhind on 27th February and reached Bharaoli (14 miles north of that town and eleven miles short of Māchhiwārā.) While halting here, the imperialists were astonished to learn that Abdāli had cut into their rear, seized Sarhind, annihilated

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* According to Ānandrām (p. 332) Ābdāli left Lahor with nearly 30,000 men. Six to seven thousand men had accompanied Ābdāli from Peshāwar to Lahor acc. to *Ashub,* ii. 454, (25,000 acc. to Ānandrām, 312.)

its garrison, and got possession of all their treasure artillery and women left there. We shall now see how this happened. [Anand., 313-15, 322-324, 333-337; *Bayān*, 228,232; *TAh.* 4*b*.-5*a*.]

§ 13. *Abdali captures Sarhind.*

After leaving Lāhor on 19th February, Abdāli had forded the Satlaj at Ludhiāna (1st March) and pushed on to Sarhind (40 miles south-eastwards) in the course of the following night. Early next morning he delivered an impetuous attack on the utterly surprised garrison of the fort. The fire of his camel-swivels drove the defenders away from the walls. Then the Afghāns by one rush reached the gate of the fort, broke it open and entered within, pillaging slaying and burning the thatched houses in the fort and the city. The imperial musketeers soon exhausted their powder and shot and were then butchered; the women were reduced to slavery. It is difficult to exaggerate the effect of this victory on the whole campaign. All the rockets, military stores, treasure &c. of the Delhi army except what was carried by the troops in the field, fell into Abdāli's hands and immensely strengthened him. The imperialists were correspondingly depressed; their rear was cut into and the invader was reported to be on the march to Delhi with a clear path before

him. The alarm reached the capital (about 10th March); the Emperor ordered a detachment to go with artillery to Sarāi Bādli, 7 miles northwest of Delhi, and block the invader's route. The ordinary citizens made a rush to flee from the city and thus escape a repetition of Nādir's massacre, but the police, under orders, shut the gates to keep them in. Many citizens however sent their women outside in disguise. [*TAh.* 6*a*.]

After taking Sarhind, Abdāli wisely sent his booty, tents and heavy baggage to Lāhor, in order to lighten his force. Then he entrenched his camp in the imperial garden outside Sarhind, put a garrison of 4,000 to defend it as his base, and sought the imperialists out. [Anand. 337, *Siyar* 19, *Mujmil* 102.]

§ 14. *Delhi army at Manupur.*

The news of the loss of Sarhind was brought to the prince's camp late on 2nd March by ten Persian scouts whom Safdar Jang had sent out. But the wazir, blinded by conceit, would not believe it, as none of his own spies had returned. Therefore, the imperial army lost one precious day in sending out fresh scouts to verify the report. When the news was found to be too true, "it so alarmed the chiefs and soldiers of India that they were on the point of dispersing without offering

battle." (*Mujmil*, 103.) The prince immediately beat a hurried retreat from Bharaoli towards Sarhind and reached Mānupur, a village ten miles north-west of the latter city, where the enemy were sighted. Here the imperialists halted and began to entrench themselves as a measure of defence. Guns were ranged round the tents of the prince and the other generals, their wheels being chained together in the Turkish fashion, ditches were dug and the earth heaped up to form ramparts, and *sangars* (musket-houses) were built at suitable points.

The huge host, with its followers, spread over 14 or 15 miles of ground. It was a dry region with only a few wells. Some more wells were dug, but not enough for that vast gathering of men and beasts. Severe scarcity of water soon made itself felt; their food supply was altogether stopped by the roving bands of the enemy. The Indian army completely immobilized itself in the face of such a swift raiding force of invaders; it was, in effect, completely invested. [Anand, 339, 343.]

Abdāli also entrenched his advanced camp, five miles north-west of Sarhind and about the same distance in front of the imperial camp at Mānupur. His roving bands had daily skirmishes with the patrols round the Delhi force. He had brought with himself only seven small portable

pieces (*tōp-i-jilau*) and therefore could not reply to the heavier and more numerous artillery of the imperialists, nor venture near the Mughal trenches within the range of these guns. But the imperial host was thrown entirely on the defensive; its unwieldy size made it vulnerable at many points and its surrender through starvation was only a question of time. The imbecile wazir rejected the idea of seeking a decision by fight before his food supply gave out, as "his plan was to avoid an action, but to cut off the enemy's food supply by inciting the neighbouring zamindars to attack his foraging parties and in the end to overpower him with artillery fire." (Anandram, 345.) From 4th to 11th March this fruitless cannonade continued. But at last the wazir's hands were forced when he saw the price he must pay for the policy of inaction which left all the initiative to the enemy. The Abdali had brought a large gun from Lahor and on the 9th mounted it on a hillock overlooking the wazir's camp; its fire began to kill his men and camels, and so he decided to risk a pitched battle two days later as preferable to such helpless slaughter.

In the morning of the appointed day (11th March 1748), all the divisions of the Delhi army got ready. The wazir was to have issued on his elephant and led the attack. He had nearly

finished his morning prayer and recital, when a cannon ball struck the ground outside his tent, rebounded over the wall and falling inside wounded him mortally in the waist.

People could not believe that it was by pure accident that a single shot fired in that direction was so well-aimed as to reach that particular tent and hit the wazir seated within it. The contemporary Anandram narrates the story that some days before this two spies of the Abdāli had gone to the wazir, pretending to have been former artillerymen of Zakariya Khan and now deserters from the compulsory service of the invader. Being fully trusted by him, they in a few days learnt all about his place of residence, habits, and hours for different kinds of work, and then returned to the Afghan camp on the plea of bringing over more deserters. The information supplied by these men so guided the Afghan gunners that one shot was enough to kill the wazir. Ghulam Ali, writing in 1807, says that Mahdi Quli Beg, Abdali's chief of ordnance, had visited the wazir with a pretended proposal of peace, and measured the distance of his tent by counting his steps.

The wazir knew that his wound was mortal. Calling his son Muin-ul-mulk from the trenches, he told him, "My son, it is all over with me.

But the Emperor's work is not yet finished. Before this news spreads, do you quickly ride out and deliver the assault. When it is done, you may think of me." These were his last words. Muin rose to the occasion; he suppressed his filial tears, hurriedly buried his father's corpse, wrapped up in its blood-stained clothes, in the floor of his sleeping tent, and levelled the sand over it, to remove all signs. Then he mounted his father's elephant and going to the army in the field publicly declared that the wazir was ill of a cold and had deputed him to lead the army in his place.

But an event so momentous could not be totally concealed. Muin imparted the news in secret to the captains of the wazir's division and made an appeal, telling them, "Advance with me or stand back from the battle as you like it, but do not take to flight during the fighting and thereby ruin our cause. I myself shall fight on till my death." (*Bayān*, 233.)

§ 15. *Battle of Mānupur.*

The imperial army consisted of about sixty thousand combatants, formed in five main divisions: the Vanguard consisting of the wazir's contingent of Turks now led by his son Muin; the Right wing under Safdar Jang at the head of a

picked body of Irāni soldiers taken over from Nādir army, besides Indians of the Purbia class; the Centre under Prince Ahmad and his guardians; the Left wing formed by a large contingent of Rajput horse under Ishwari Singh of Jaipur and other Rajahs; and the Rearguard under Nāsir Khan. The baggage camp was placed behind the Centre. In the actual fighting the Vanguard formed one line abreast of the two wings.

Abdāli's army* on the best estimate was not more than 12,000 strong, and the imperialists were five-fold superior to him in number of men and immeasurably stronger in artillery. The

* Battle of Manupur: best accounts, Anandram 343-377, *TAh* 6*b*-9*a*, and *Mujmil* 104-112 (after discounting his Shia partisanship.) *Bayan* 233-235 and *Siyar,* iii. 19, are brief but helpful. *Husain Shahi* 27-29, much later, meagre and derivative. Anandram and *TAh* differ greatly as regards the events after the battle, but *TAh* is the best authority for these.

At Mānupur Abdali's army is most correctly estimated at not more than 12,000 troopers and the imperialists at between 60 and 70 thousand [*TAh.* 5*b*.] *Siyar,* iii. 19 makes an underestimate, 'Abdali's forces did not exceed 6 or 7 thousand', while Anandram 332 exaggerates the number to 'nearly 30,000 troopers.' The Delhi army is swollen by rumour to 'more than 2 lakhs of men and 200 pieces of cannon' [*Mujmil.* 100], and even 2½ lakhs [*Husain Shāhi,* 24.] The force with which Abdali had marched upon Lahor is given by Ashub ii. 454 as 6 to 7 thousand (an underestimate), by *Husain Shāhi* as 12,000 (most likely), and by Anandram 312 as 25,000 (inflated.) *TAh* 7*b* makes a self-contradictory slip, placing Safdar J. in the Left W. and Ishwari S. in the Right Wing.

Indian lines were drawn out too long and their Centre was too well protected in front by formidable rows of big guns. Abdali knew his own inferiority in number and gun-power and determined to make the best use of the superior mobility and energy of his soldiers by not fighting a regular battle of the conventional type, division against division, but by merely containing the imperial Centre and directing his main attack on the van and the two wings, so as to break through them and threaten the Indian camp in the rear. A special division was told off to fall upon the imperialists' baggage by any path it could find during the confusion of the battle.

The conflict began at noon. By that time the Indian troops had marched out of their trenches and drawn up in battle array on the field beyond them. The Afghāns began the attack. The fury of their assault first fell on the imperial vanguard. Abdāli's chief commander Muhammad Taqi Khān Shirāzi assailed it at the head of 3,000 Qizilbāsh troops (*i.e.*, Turks settled in Persia.) These according to their usual tactics made a succession of charges, each time galloping up, delivering a rapid volley, then quickly falling back as the imperialists pressed forward, and advancing again to the attack after being refreshed and reinforced. The fight in this quarter was most obstinate.

Muin and his comrades fought with desperate valour and caused heavy slaughter among the Afghāns, who were checked by the sheer weight of numbers and devastated by the heavy artillery in the Mughal trenches. Abdāli repeatedly pushed up supports to Muhammad Taqi to maintain the battle. Muin stood his ground but with heavy losses.

Very early in the fight, the Afghāns had found an easier prey in the Rājputs (the Left wing). A body of 3,000 of Abdāli's horsemen with 200 swivels carried on camels, had formed itself in two divisions. Each half galloped up to within easy range of the Rājputs, delivered their fire, and galloped back like the wind. Immediately afterwards the second group attacked in the same way. Thus, while the Rājputs were waiting for the enemy and twirling their moustaches in full confidence of victory by their clever swordsmanship and reckless courage when the contest would come to the decision of cold steel, they found hundreds of their saddles being emptied at each volley without their being able to touch an enemy. This strange method of warfare shook the nerves of the Rājputs, trained in the obsolete tactics of two centuries ago. The Afghans seized the moment and drove into the confused and wavering crowd, cutting it up "like the sections of a

cucumber." The Rājput leader, Ishwari Singh, had early heard of the wazir's death, and received despairing counsel from his chief adviser, a barber (!), who had told him, "When the wazir is dead, what can *you* do against the Abdāli?" Seeing the havoc among his followers and no chance of restoring the fight under the circumstances, the Rajah at once fled away from the field, abandoning his section of the trenches also. So hurried was his flight that he threw his kettle-drums and light artillery (*rahkala*) into wells, and abandoned his baggage to be looted by the rascals of the army. His leaderless followers scattered right and left and crowded into the trenches of the prince and Muin for shelter.

By the path thus left open, one Afghan division penetrated to the baggage and after plundering it turned to the rear of Muin's trenches on the heels of the fugitive Rājputs. Even the imperial Centre was threatened, and the prince in alarm appealed to Safdar Jang for aid. Desertions to the rear began among the Indian fighters, both generals and common soldiers being panic-stricken.

Muin delivered a counter-charge on the Afghān Centre and engaged it at close quarters, with heavy slaughter on both sides. Muin's skin was grazed by a bullet, his brother Fakhr-ud-din received a shot in his foot, an officer Adina Beg

was twice wounded, and Jānish Khān and some other Turāni *sardārs* of this division were slain. This was the crisis of the battle. But the scale was soon turned in favour of the Indians by the bravery and enterprise of Safdar Jang and a happy accident.

One of the Afghān divisions had been posted opposite Safdar Jang (on the imperial Right wing.) By Abdāli's order 700 of his camel-swivels had been advanced to a hillock overlooking Safdar Jang's position; here the camels were made to lie down, their knees were tied together, and the swivels were directed against the Indian troops. Safdar Jang met this danger by dismounting 1700 of his musketeers and sending them to charge up the hillock on foot. With one concerted volley of their long pieces (*jizails*) these men slew many of the Afghān gunners, routed the survivors, and captured all their camels and swivels. A counter-attack failed to recover the hillock; Abdāli's men, as they ran up the slope, were shot down by the soldiers of Safdar Jang in possession of the crest. Thus, the Afghān wing engaging the imperial Right was decisively defeated. Safdar Jang now had breathing time; he detached men to reinforce the prince (in the Centre), and made a bold advance into the field with all his troops in line, preceded by rockets, long firelocks (*jizail*) and light artillery

(*rahkala*), in order to draw away the Afghān attack from Muin (van) upon himself.

Meantime, some carts full of rockets which Abdāli had captured caught fire from the recklessness of the plunderers, several thousands of rockets at once flew up into the air, the sparks falling from them ignited the gunpowder of the Afghān field artillery, a thousand of Abdāli's soldiers were burnt to death, and utter disorder fell on their ranks. This calamity, coupled with Safdar Jang's intervention in the contest in the Mughal van, which came just when the enemy had been checked by Muin, at last decided the day. The Afghān soldiers resisted no longer, but broke and fled.

§ 16. *Defeat and retreat of Afghan army.*

Ahmad Abdāli, however, was too good a general to admit an utter defeat. He put a bold face on it and made a firm stand in a small mud-fort a short distance behind the battle-field, checking the Mughal advance by musket-fire. By the time the imperialists brought big guns to bear on the fort, night had descended, and the Afghans fled away under cover of the darkness. To the Mughals the victory was quite unlooked for and they durst not follow it up at once, but deemed it wiser to keep a careful watch in their own trenches during the whole of the night, each

man sleeping fully armed in his own appointed place, the generals sitting on horseback, the sentries regularly going round, and random shots being fired by way of precaution till next morning.

Abdāli retired from the field in the course of that night, with only two to three thousand followers, many of whom were wounded. The imperialists could not set out in pursuit on the following day, nor even for four days after their victory, as they were quite in the dark about the enemy's real condition and exact position. Rumours spread in their camp that the Afghān commander-in-chief had been slain,* and even that the Abdāli king himself was killed or at least wounded. No Indian soldier durst go out singly to scout. Abdāli beguiled the prince and Safdar Jang for a few days by sending envoys to ask for terms of peace, and used this respite to get his broken army together, sent away his camp baggage and treasure to Lahor by a neglected path, and finally one night began his retreat towards Lāhor quite unperceived. It was only on the 16th of March, or five days after the battle, that the

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* Years afterwards, Abdul Karim reported it as an actual occurrence. (*Bayān*, 235.) *TAh* 9a states that Safdar Jang reported to the prince on 16th March [should be 17th] that Abdali had died of his wounds and that Taqi Kh. and other *sardārs* had carried his corpse away!

imperial army ventured to march out towards the Afghān camp, in full strength and battle array, but found it deserted. The jungle which covered all the land from Sarhind to the river Satlaj rendered pursuit slow and ineffective. Even the scouts could not get prompt and correct intelligence of the enemy. The imperialists continued to feel their way towards that river, clinging together for safety and precaution, rather like a camp in constant dread of a surprise than in the spirit of self-confident victors. The Afghān rear-guard, some two thousand horse, were once sighted in the jungle, and fought skirmishes from a distance on the 16th and 17th, but retired before the imperial artillery. On the 18th, the Mughals recovered Sarhind. Abdāli crossed over at Ludhiāna the day before and then went on to Lāhor. This city he first vacated of his booty, and then hastened towards Qandahār *via* Peshawar, as he had heard that his deputy and nephew Luqmān Khān had rebelled during his absence. [Anand, 370—377; *TAh.* 8*a*-9*b*; *Mujmil*, 112.]

The last brush with the enemy took place on 17th March, and two days later the prince resumed his advance, arriving at the bank of the Satlaj near Ludhiāna on the 21st. Here a halt for some days was made to refresh the troops worn out by the fight and the march through the jungle. This

halt was prolonged for weeks, because Safdar Jang, who had become the centre of all affairs after the wazir's death, fell ill and took to his bed for 10 or 12 days. Even when he recovered he evaded carrying out the prince's order to cross the Satlaj and advance upon Lāhor, but made one or two futile marches along the river bank. All further operations were stopped on 9th April, when letters were received from the Emperor urgently recalling the prince to Court and appointing Muin-ul-mulk governor of Lāhor and Nāsir Khān that of Kābul. These two were given their *conge* on the 11th and 12th and the prince set his face towards Delhi on the latter of these dates. [*TAh.* 9*b*-10*b;* the earlier dates have been corrected by adding one day.]

CHAPTER VI.

Malwa and Rajputana, down to 1741.

§ 1. *Condition of the Rajputs during the decline of the imperial power.*

With the death of Rāj Singh of Mewār (1680), the last hero of the Sisodia clan passed away. The Mahārānā, who had ever since the coming of the Mughals filled the highest place in the public eye among the Hindu chiefs of India, now fell back into complete isolation and obscurity. His unrivalled social status and the mythical glamour of his blood still remained; but in the political field, from the beginning of the 18th century onwards, the primacy among the Rājputs was contested between the Kachhwāh and the Rāthor. The once third-rate and obscure house of Amber had risen in the course of a century and a half to the front rank by the most brilliant and valued service to the empire in far apart fields, thanks to the signal capacity for war and diplomacy displayed by four generations of its chieftains,—Bhagwān Dās and Mān Singh under Akbar, Mirzā Rājah Jai Singh under Shāh Jahān and Aurangzib, and Sawāi Jai Singh under the later Mughals.

The Kachhwāh dynasty ended by challenging the old hereditary pre-eminence of the Rāthors in the Mughal Court, which the long minority and 30 years' war in Mārwār after Jaswant's death had naturally eclipsed. This jealous rivalry between Jaipur and Jodhpur is the dominating factor of Rājput society* even under British rule.

The disorder and destruction following from this contest for primacy were immensely multiplied by the entrance of another factor into Rājput politics in the middle 18th century, which ended only with the total ruin and humiliation of this noble race. The imperial Government of Delhi had held together and protected all the feudatory States of India. But when the Emperor became a lifeless shadow confined within the harem, when the wazir's sole pursuit was pleasure varied only by contests with his Court rivals, this unifying bond and common controlling authority was dissolved. No superior power was left to enforce lawful rights and prevent ambitious conflicts between one vassal State and another, one prince

* In Oct. 1923, when I visited Jaipur to inspect its historical records at the invitation of the Government, the first question that a very intelligent hereditary noble of the State put to me was, "You have studied the history of India much; tell me whether you consider the Kachhwāhs greater than the Rāthors or the reverse"! This is the state of public feeling in that country even in the twentieth century.

and another of the same royal house. All the pent up personal ambitions and inter-State rivalries,—which the strong hand of the paramount Power at Delhi, from Akbar to Bahādur Shāh, had repressed for a century and a half,—now burst forth without fear or check. And Rājputāna became a zoological garden with the barriers of the cages thrown down and the keepers removed. The fiercest animal passions raged throughout the land, redeemed only now and then by individual instances of devotion and chivalry which had not yet totally disappeared from the human bosom.

There was no crime which a Rājput would not commit for the sake of land. Father killed son and son murdered father. Women of the noblest rank gave poison to their trusting kinsmen. Kings took the lives of loyal ministers. None, not even the highest born descendant of the god Rāma, shrank from buying the aid of an alien plunderer to decide his domestic contests.

War is the only profession for which the Rājput gentleman and noble is fitted by character, tradition and training; and land is the only possession that can give him a life of honour and comfort. But when the Mughal empire reached its fullest expansion and the later Emperors became too timid to embark on new wars and too pleasure-loving to maintain large armies for

defence, the Rajput manhood became doomed to unemployment idleness and vice. No honourable and lucrative career abroad was left open to them. Confined within the narrow limits of their sterile homes, they turned their swords against one another. Civil war raged in every family, which quickly involved the neighbouring States as the allies of one or other of the rivals. Every prince's land-hunger at the expense of his neighbours now burst forth, heedless of consequences. The Marātha and the Pindhāri ravaged the land. This sickening tale continued for over eighty years, and the sacrifice of the Indian Iphigenia, Krishna Kumāri, was only one among the many tragedies that blackened Rajput history during this truly dark age. Disorder, public plunder, economic ruin, and moral degradation were the chronic condition of Rājasthān from the declining years of Muhammad Shāh to the day when British suzerainty was accepted by the land and British peace came at last to heal the wounds of the long suffering race. War, domestic and foreign, ceased, and since then the martial manhood of Rājputāna has sunk into the placid sleep of opium, for

> Unknown to them when sensual pleasures cloy,
> To fill the languid pause with finer joy.

Aurangzib's policy and measures had totally

alienated the Rājput race, with the exception of a small number of the Hādā and other minor clansmen, and driven them outside the service and civilising influence of the Delhi Government. The result, as we all know, was harmful to the empire; but it was even more ruinous to the Rājputs themselves. The Rājputs, who had filled Indian history during the preceding three centuries, began in the 18th century to find themselves a played out race, falling steadily to the background in Indian life. Self-centred and doomed to inertia within their own out-of-the-way corner of India, they were year by year outstripped by the moving races of our country.

The Rājput racial character and habits made them quite unsuitable material for the new type of warfare and the long campaigns which began to prevail in the middle of the 18th century. The use of longer-ranged and more rapidly firing muskets, the elaborate organisation and diversified branches of armies following European lines introduced a radical change to which the Rājputs were incapable of adjusting themselves. The new warfare was incompatible with the system of jealous minutely subdivided clans under which they had been brought up. Moreover, war had now become immensely more costly. The day was past when all fighting could be done by yeomen-

retainers who left their villages with horse and spear, followed their lord in his battles, and returned to their fields after a brief season's campaign. The poverty of the Rājput States, their sterile soil, sparse immobile population, lack of trade, all kept the resources of their chiefs down to a low primitive standard of scantiness and simplicity. These were quite inadequate for the universal equipment with muskets, the extended use of artillery, the profuse expenditure of munitions both in the field and in the previous training, and the feeding of armies for long campaigns outside the homeland, which the wars of the middle 18th century demanded. The lords of Rājasthān found themselves unable to stand against foes from outside, and could vent their energies in domestic brawls only.

§ 2. *The chief centres of dispute in Rājputāna under Muhammad Shah.*

The three storm-centres in Rājputāna in the second quarter of the 18th century were Bundi, Jaipur, and Mārwār. In the Hādā country there had recently sprung up a rivalry for the headship of that clan between the old senior branch with its seat at Bundi and the junior branch enjoying the appanage of Kotā, which the Emperor Jahāngir had in 1624 made independent of the former by

declaring its chief a feudatory holding direct of the Crown. A quarrel was precipitated in 1707 by the then Kotā chief claiming the headship the entire Hādā clan. Their rivalry was encouraged by Aurangzib's sons at that time and later by the Sayyid brothers and some other Delhi nobles to serve their own ends. But this quarrel was submerged by a greater threat to the honour of the clan when Sawāi Jai Singh embarked upon a campaign of ambition to make Bundi a vassal of Jaipur by ousting its legitimate ruler Budh Singh and giving his throne to Dalil Singh (a laird of the house of Karwar) in 1729. The various attempts of the dispossessed Budh Singh and his gallant son Ummed Singh to recover their own constitute the history of that part of Rājputāna during the next 19 years and ended in the complete triumph of Ummed Singh.

In Jaipur the struggle raged between Ishwari Singh (reign 1743—1750) and his younger brother Mādho Singh, the latter claiming to set aside the eldest-born of his father on the ground of his own mother having been the Mahārāna's daughter, to whose offspring Jai Singh had promised the succession at the time of marrying her. Ishwari Singh held his own during his life time by heavy concessions to his brother, and it was only after

his death without issue that the throne passed to Mādho Singh.

In Mārwār the rivals were Rām Singh, the successor of Mahārājah Abhay Singh, and his paternal uncle Bakht Singh, the chief of Nāgor. The contest began in 1749, soon after the death of Abhay Singh, and though Bakht Singh gained the throne in 1751 and bequeathed it to his own progeny, the land knew no peace till the death of the dispossessed Rām Singh (1773).

Each of these three dynastic quarrels drew into its vortex the neighbours of the two main contestants, and in time all three became merged into one, with a clear-cut array of allies facing opponents similarly confederated. The Marāthas were called in to decide the issue, and that by every party and almost in every year. In the end the three claimants mentioned above gained their ancestral thrones, but only after ruining and weakening their kingdoms and leaving the Marāthas in supreme command over a divided impotent and impoverished Rājputānā which lay helplessly subject to their annual exactions and ravage. Such is the mournful story of Rājasthān upon which we shall now enter.

§ 3. *Character of the leading Rajput princes.*

A study of the characters of the chief actors in this tragic drama will help us to understand

the course of events better. The two outstanding personages of this period, in energy persistence and courage, were Bakht Singh Rāthor and Ummed Singh Hādā. The other Rājahs and princes of the time fell below the average of human character and intellect. Jai Singh II had begun his reign as a lad of 18 (in 1699) with the brightest of promises and had won honours under the very eyes of Aurangzib, as a lieutenant of Prince Bidār Bakht, during the strenuous warfare in the Marātha hills. Later, he rose to command supreme influence for a Hindu at the imperial Court and to hold the government of important provinces like Agra and Mālwa. His intellect was exceptionally keen and versatile for a Rājput. But his later record was barren of glory or success, and he failed utterly when sent against the Marāthas, either through disloyal collusion or through equally disgraceful cowardice. Indeed, if the Emperor's cause had been served with the courage enterprise and fidelity of his illustrious grand-father Mirzā Rājah Jai Singh, instead of Sawāi Jai Singh's love of sensual ease, misappropriation of the imperial chest of military defence, and treacherous subserviency to the enemies of the country, the Marāthas would have been successfully kept out of Northern India, and Rājputāna would have been spared the horrors of Marātha domination. After

failing to make a stand against the Marātha invaders in Mālwa, and inducing the Emperor to make a complete surrender to them (1736), Jai Singh returned to his own State and gave himself up to sexual excess. He had always been a deep drinker and now the habitual use of aphrodisiacs to stimulate his failing powers entirely ruined his health, till at last he died of a loathsome disease on 21st September, 1743. [*Vam. Bh.*, 3322.]

The next king of Jaipur, Ishwari Singh (r. 1743-1750), lacked his father's courage and cleverness, though he inherited most of his vices. He was a weak-minded man, liable to sudden and capricious changes of opinion under the lead of rogues or fools. The exceptional capacity and devotion of several hereditary officers of his house often saved his troops in battles, where their chieftain's cowardice and incompetence would have ruined them, as he had covered them with shame and loss on the field of Mānupur (1748.)

The ruler of Jodhpur, Mahārājah Rāj-Rājeshwar Abhay Singh, for such were his superlative titles, (r. 1724—1749), had been solicited by the Emperor to take up the *subahdāri* of Gujrāt (1729.) After a year spent at home in making preparations, he had reached Ahmadābād (October, 1730) and made his appointment good by defeating his refractory and dismissed predecessor Sarbuland

Khān. The spoils of this campaign were reported in the pardonable hyperbole of his Court poets as "four *kror* of Rupees and 1,400 guns of all calibres, besides military stores of every description." His bardic flatterers sang, "Abhay Malla rules over the seventeen thousand towns of Gujrāt and nine thousand of Mārwār besides one thousand elsewhere. The princes of Idar, Bhuj, Pārkar, Sind, Sirohi, Jesalmir, Jhunjhuno, Dongarpur . . . . . and Nāgor every morning bowed the head to Abhay Malla." Though his governorship of Gujrat had ended ingloriously in two years in his surrender of *chauth* to the Marāthas and his return home with failure, such eulogies would have turned a stronger head than his. He became insane with pride. "His ferocious courage was tempered only by excessive indolence . . . . and his love of ease and opium increased with years." (Tod, ii. Marwar, ch. 11.)

His son and successor, Rām Singh (r. 1749—1751), "inherited the arrogance of his father with all the impetuosity of the Chauhāns" (of Sirohi, his mother's stock.) Utterly lacking in self-control, foresight and consideration of his own good, this youngman came to unbridled sovereign power at the age of nineteen, and very quickly alienated all his nobles and kinsfolk by

the display of boundless pride, violence of temper and insolence of tongue.

§ 4. *First Marātha conquest of Malwā.*

The Marātha penetration of the province of Mālwa supplied the most convenient starting point for raids into Rājputānā. Indeed, the Rājput States, though under Hindu rulers, could not remain outside the sphere of Marātha aggression as, apart from their untapped wealth, their two greatest princes, Abhay Singh of Mārwār and Sawāi Jai Singh of Jaipur, were appointed by the Emperor governors of Gujrāt and Mālwa respectively and were bound in duty to oppose Marātha encroachments upon their charges.

Girdhar Bahādur, who was *subahdār* of Mālwa from September 1722 to November 1728 (except for the two years, 1723—1725, when he had to make room for the Nizām's nominee), was defeated and killed by Chimnāji, the younger brother of the Peshwā Bāji Rāo, near the fort of Māndu on 29th November 1728. His cousin Dayā Bahādur, who then took up the command of his forces, met with the same fate at the hands of the same general, close to the same place (Amjhera) about the 14th December following.* Girdhar Bahadur's son

* When I edited William Irvine's *Later Mughals* in 1920, I could give only my conjectures for the dates of the death of

Bhavānirām was next appointed by the Emperor as acting *subahdār* of Mālwa, and for two years (1729-30) battled manfully against increasing difficulties to hold his own. In January 1731, Muhammad Khān Bangash reached Ujjain as the new viceroy, but he could effect nothing with his own resources which the Emperor did not supplement. His stay in his new charge was short and he failed in his struggle with the Marāthas here as completely as he had failed in Bundelkhand in 1729. Next year he was replaced as governor by Sawāi Jai Singh,* who started from his capital on

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Girdhar Bahādur and Dayā Bahādur and the governorship of Bhavāni-rām (ii. 243-249), because the Persian authorities are silent on the point and I had before me only a rough translation of the Persian correspondence of Girdhar Bahādur's sons, the *Ājāib-ul-āfāq,* no ms. of which is available in India, so that I could not utilise the dates (if any) given in the original. The Marātha letters printed by Parasnis contain gross errors of date. But the chronology and main features of the history of this period have been correctly established by the recent publication of the State-papers of the Peshwas, *S.P.D.,* xiii. and xxii.

* *Farman* of appointment dated 28 Sep. 1732. *Vamsha Bhāskar,* p. 3133, states that Jai Singh being ordered by the Emperor to go to Mālwa started from Jaipur on 23rd Oct. 1729. But he was sent there this time not to act as governor but to drive the Marāthas out with his own forces. *Ibid,* p. 3212. Jai Singh's more engrossing cares were the decoration of his new capital and the construction of four astronomical observatories. For the latter purpose he summoned the Jesuit Father Boudier from Bengal in 1733 and Fathers Antoine Gabelsperguer and Andre Strobl from Germany in 1736 to Jaipur, paying their

20th October 1732 and reached Ujjain in December.

But the Emperor's Mālwa viceroys, old and new, were equally unsuccessful against the Marāthas. Jai Singh received large sums (20 lakhs of Rupees) from his impoverished master on condition of raising an army and driving the Marāthas out of the province. But he only made a show of fighting and preferred the policy of buying them off for the time with a part of the money given him, pocketing the balance, and thereafter passing his days in his own kingdom regardless of the fate of the province entrusted to his care. [*Warid,* 115-116.]

§ 5. *Jai Singh defeated by the Marathas in Malwa.*

At the beginning of 1733, Malhar Rāo Holkar and Rānoji Sindhia, after finishing their work in Gujrāt by taking Champānir and provisioning Pāvāgarh, came on raid to Mālwa. Jai Singh was then at Māndesar. The Marātha generals, leaving their camp behind, advanced with a light force, hemmed the Rājah round and put his troops

expenses. (Tieffenthaler, tr. by Bernoulli, i. 307.) *S.P.D.* xiii. 51. *Vam. Bh.* 3212.

Order by Rajah Shāhu, 18 March 1730, "Jai S. has come to the Ujjain province. Chimnaji Udaji Pawar and Malhar Holkar are ordered to treat him with respect in view of the old hereditary friendship between the two royal families. Give him Māndu fort if he asks for it." [Vad. i. p. 95.]

to great distress by cutting off their grain and water supply. Krishnāji Pawār and Udāji Pawār, out of jealousy for the Peshwā, had been tempted to join their forces with Jai Singh. But Holkar plundered a part of Udāji's baggage, and mutual friends intervened, severely rebuked the Pawārs for their alliance with their nation's enemy and induced them to withdraw from the Mughal side. Jai Singh had to sue for peace, offering six *lakhs* of Rupees to the Marāthas, but Holkar held out for more. While these negotiations were going on, the Rājput captains, emboldened by a rumour that the Emperor in person was marching from Delhi to Agra to support them, came forth to battle. The commander of Jai Singh's rear-guard was slain. On Holkar's side a hundred or two hundred horses and some fifteen high officers were killed, and he fell back about 30 miles, while Jai Singh advanced 16 miles. Then Holkar rapidly doubled back to Jai Singh's position. The Rājput prince had no more stomach for fighting left; he made peace by promising to pay six *lakhs* in cash and to cede 28 parganahs in lieu of *chauth*. This happened at the end of February. (*S. P. D.*, xiv., 2, xv. 6.)

From April to December 1733, Bāji Rāo was engaged in the war with the Siddis of Janjirā and the main Marātha forces were concentrated there.

Pilāji Jādav planned to march into Hindustān at the end of this year, and skirting Narwar on his right, enter Kotā and Bundi territory and levy contribution there for a month or so, finally returning by way of Orchhā and Datiā, where the Marāthas had already established their hold. But the plan was modified; he was at Nimār at the end of December and then went to Bundelkhand where Holkar and Sindhia too were assembled. He next marched from Datiā to Gwālior, but finding the whole country desolate and thankful to get only Rs. 50 from a village where he could, he fell back on Narwar, where we find him on 8th April 1734. Finally Pilāji returned to the Deccan marching with Chanderi on his left hand. The Bundi expedition was undertaken by Holkar and Sindhia. (*S. P. D.*, xiv. 10, 11, 13.)

Gujrāt and Mālwa were practically lost to the Empire, but hitherto no Marātha had entered Rājputāna. Now, however, the eternal domestic feuds of that unhappy land brought the Deccanis in, first as hired allies and finally as masters levying tribute and ravaging the country year after year. We shall here trace the steps that led up to this.

§ 6. *The dispute for the throne of Bundi.*

Sawāi Jai Singh, finding that his position and influence at the imperial Court were unrivalled

by any other Hindu feudatory and daily witnessing the increasing weakness and incapacity of his suzerain, embarked on "a deeply cherished scheme" for imposing his supremacy over the minor Rājahs. He determined to seize upon all the districts on his frontiers within his grasp. (Tod, ii. Haravati, Ch. 3.) He occupied the fort of Bundi with his own troops during its ruler Budh Singh's absence and secured from the Emperor an edict transferring that State to Dalil Singh (the second son of Sālim Singh Hādā of Karwar), on condition of his acknowledging the house of Jaipur as his overlord, (*c.* Sept. 1729.) Budh Singh survived his fall for ten years (dying on 26 April 1739), and though his excessive consumption of wine and opium, joined to the disappointments and hardships of his lot, soon deranged his never very sane mind, he for the rest of his life and his exceptionally gallant and able son Ummed Singh after him gave the usurper no rest till at last Ummed Singh entered the capital of his ancestors and was crowned king of Bundi (23rd October 1748); but his heritage continued even thereafter to be disturbed by internal enemies and fleeced by the Marāthas. [*Vamsha Bh.*, 3542, 3285.]

Jai Singh, the sole prop of the usurper of Bundi, having left his home for Mālwa at the end

of 1729, Budh Singh advanced to recover his lost city. But Jaipur troops quickly arrived to the aid of Sālim, who was holding Bundi for his young son Dalil. This huge host scared away most of the supporters of Budh Singh, so that he counselled his followers not to fight. But some of his devoted tenants would not listen to him, they attacked the Jaipur force and were defeated, at Kusalath, 6th April 1730. (*Vamsha Bh.*, p. 3147.) Dalil Singh, thus freed from rivalry, was crowned on 19th May and married to a daughter of Jai Singh.

§ 7. *First Maratha invasion of Rajputana.*

The defeated Budh Singh took refuge in Udaipur and then at Begham, and sank deeper and deeper into wine and opium, finally turning mad. But he found an unexpected ally. Pratāp Singh Hādā, the eldest son of Sālim Singh, on seeing his younger brother Dalil raised to the throne of Bundi, came over to Budh Singh's side out of wounded pride and fought against his own father and brother. He was now sent to the Deccan by Budh Singh's queen with her money for hiring Marātha aid against Dalil Singh. The price was settled at six *lakhs* of Rupees. On 22nd April 1734, the day of a solar eclipse, Malhar Rāo Holkar and Rānoji Sindhia, guided by Pratāp

Singh, attacked Bundi which was being held by Sālim Singh the regent. In the end the fort was captured and Sālim Singh was carried away as prisoner by the Marāthas. The queen of Budh Singh tied the *rākhi* thread round the wrist of Malhar, publicly declaring the goat-herd's son the brother of a princess of the solar line that claimed descent from the god Rāmchandra. But as soon as Malhar had left, a Jaipur force, 20,000 strong, came and restored Dalil Singh at Bundi. [*Vam. Bh.*, 3216-3220.]

This first Marātha penetration into Rājputāna had opened the eyes of the more thoughtful among the princes to their perilous condition. The terror of it continued to be remembered for long afterwards.* In the second half of October 1734, Jai Singh called a conference of all the Rājahs of Rājasthān at Hurdā near Agaunch (a village in Mewār) to concert measures for keeping the Deccani spoliators out of their fatherland. That end could be reached only by a close co-operation with the imperial troops sent against the same enemies. But nothing came of the meeting. Indeed, the moral decay of the Mughal nobility made a vigorous and united policy of defence against the Marāthas impossible. [*Vam. Bh.* 3227.]

* Tod. i. Mewar, Ch. 15.

§ 8. *Imperial campaigns in Malwa and Rajputana, 1734-35, fail.*

In October 1734, the imperial Court planned a grand campaign under its two highest officers, the *wazir* Qamruddin and the *bakhshi* Khān-i-Daurān, to expel the Marāthas from Mālwa and Rājputāna. Next month the wazir started from Delhi, at the head of 25,000 men, *via* Agra for Bundelkhand where Pilāji Jādav was roving. Two or three light engagements took place between them in February 1735, as the result of which Pilāji retreated to Sipri and Kulāras, while the wazir stayed at Narwar, 24 miles north of the enemy's position. After a few more skirmishes, Pilāji withdrew his baggage from Bundelkhand and set out for the Deccan by the Chānda and Deogarh route (April.) The wazir returned to Delhi, arriving there on 9th May, 1735. [*S. P. D.*, xiv. 22, 21.]

The campaign in the western theatre had been entrusted to Khān-i-Daurān. He set out from Delhi at the same time as the *wazir* and on the way to Ajmir was joined by Jai Singh of Jaipur, Abhay Singh of Jodhpur, and Rao Durjan Sāl of Kotā with their contingents. In this way his force became a vast host (whose number was swelled by rumour to two hundred thousand men) with artillery and munition carts "beyond count."

Crossing the Mukundarā pass, the imperial army reached Rampurā territory, where Holkar and Sindhia were sighted (early in February.) Its unwieldly size, composite character and slack organisation foredoomed it to failure against the Marātha light horse led by born cavalry generals like Malhar and Rānoji. For eight days the Marāthas circled round Khān-i-Daurān, absolutely immobilising his army, cutting off its provisions and fodder, and capturing horses and camels from it. Then the Marāthas made a lightning raid. Leaving the *bakhshi* and his allies there, they crossed the Mukundarā pass, went to Bundi-Kotā and thence into the now defenceless Jaipur and Jodhpur territories, the imperialists painfully toiling up far behind them. Finding the field clear, Malhar raided many places in this region. The loot of the rich city of Sambhar, then under the Emperor's direct administration, on 28th February, yielded him a rich harvest. The *faujdār* Fakhru was robbed of everything he possessed (worth three *lakhs* of Rupees, besides 3 or 4 elephants) and let off with only the clothes he stood in. The *qāzi* of the city, after slaying his women in the Hindu manner of *jauhar,* fought the invaders with frenzy, and fell down wounded. Early in March, the position of the two sides was this: Khān-i-Daurān had taken post at Kotā,

Jai Singh near his capital, and Malhar and Rānoji some 20 miles from the latter.—(*Siyar*, ii. 83, *S. P. D.*, xiv. 23, 21, Rustam Ali in Elliot, viii. 51.)

Thus, in both the theatres of war, the armies of the empire failed to achieve any decisive result and were, indeed, hard put to it to defend and feed their unwieldy numbers. The smaller Marātha forces had completely rendered them immobile and powerless. At last, the *wazir* offered a bribe of five *lakhs* to Pilāji for vacating Mālwa. In Rājputāna, Khān-i-Daurān, after wasting many weeks at Bundi in utter inaction, listened to Jai Singh's advice and induced the Marāthas to retire beyond the Narmadā by promising them on behalf of the Emperor 22 lakhs as the *chauth* of Mālwa. This understanding was effected on 22nd March at a meeting between Khān-i-Daurān and the two Marātha generals through the mediation of Jai Singh,—the camps of Khān-i-Daurān and Jai Singh being then at Kotā and that of the Marāthas at Bundi.* (*S. P. D.*,

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* The later negotiations on this point will be described afterwards. (*S.P.D.* xiv. 31, 47.)

In April 1735 Holkar and Sindhia invaded Mārwār, under orders of Bāji Rāo in order to punish Abhay Singh for his recent hostile action. Their orders were to spare the territories of Jaipur and Mewār with scrupulous care. Indeed, the ravaging of Abhay

xiv. 27, 23; xxii. 284.) From this inglorious campaign the two heads of the Mughal army returned to Delhi at the end of April, 1735. The Marātha generals retired, Rānoji to Ujjain, Malhar to Kālābāgh, and Pilāji to Sironj (June.) (*S. P. D.*, xiv. 29, 30.)

§ 9. *North-Indian pilgrimage of Peshwa's mother, 1735.*

In the meantime, this armed clash with the empire had come at an inopportune moment for the Peshwā. He had arranged for a complete North Indian pilgrimage for his mother Rādhā Bāi. She crossed the Tāpti at Burhānpur on 9th March 1734, in charge of the astrologer, Bābuji Nāyak Joshi, who had lived long in Benares and was familiar with North Indian shrines. Everywhere she was supplied with escort by the officers of the imperial Government and the local chiefs, while the Rājput Rājahs whose capitals she visited treated her with the high respect due to a noble Brāhman widow and the mother of an all-conquering son. They personally welcomed her, introduced her to their queens, and gave her rich presents. Travelling in this way, Rādhā Bāi

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Singh's kingdom would only please Jai Singh, as Bāji Rāo wrote to his master. (*S.P.D.*, xiii. 49.) xiv. 14 probably belongs to the March of this year.

visited Udaipur (6th May), Nāthdwārā, Jaipur (*c.* 16 July), Mathurā, Kurukshetra, Allahabad, Benāres and Gayā (November), then back again to Benāres, whence she turned to Bundelkhand in January 1736, and finally reached Punā on 2 May. (*S. P. D.*, ix. 12, 13, 14, xiv. 21, 31, 39, 51, xxii. 330; *Vamsha Bh.*, p. 3223.)

§ 10. *How Jai Singh promoted Maratha interests in Hindustan.*

When the vast armament and heavy expenditure of the imperial campaign in the first quarter of 1735 not only failed to crush the Marāthas but ended only with the promise to pay a huge contribution of 22 *lakhs,* the Emperor was naturally angry at this disgraceful result. His Court threw the blame for it on Jai Singh as the officer most directly concerned from his office of *subahdār* of Agra and Mālwa, and on Khān-i-Daurān, his ally and constant supporter at Court. Sādat Khān, the governor of Oudh, told the Emperor, "Jai Singh has ruined the entire empire by his secret support of the Marāthas. Give me only the governorship of Agra and Mālwa, I do not ask for any money aid. Jai Singh has asked for a *kror* of Rupees to equip his army for this war, but I have enough treasure of my own. The Nizām is my friend; he will hinder the Marāthas from

crossing the Narmadā." Sarbuland Khān equally denounced Jai Singh.

The Emperor censured Jai Singh and Khān-i-Daurān for having bought the Marathas off. The Khān pleaded, "I only promised the Marātha generals who had entered Mālwa that they would be given as *jāgir* those parganahs of the province which were in the hands of the refractory Ruhelas and other brigands, but that they should never trouble any district under the Emperor's (rule.) Bāji Rāo is obedient to your Majesty in every way. See how he has brought his family to Northern India on the plea of bathing in the Ganges. His mother also has come here on pilgrimage. . . . The Marāthas cannot be effectually subdued by fighting. But by friendly negotiations I shall induce Bāji Rāo, or at least his brother Chimnāji, to come and meet the Emperor. If his desires are granted, the imperial dominions will be freed from disturbance in future. If, on the other hand, Sādat Khān and the Nizām unite, they will set up another Emperor." (*S. P. D.*, xiv. 47, 39, 31.)

This talk of removing him from his two viceroyalties reached Jai Singh's ears and positively antagonised him towards the Emperor. A selfish opportunist, he never had much loyalty to the throne. Calling the Marātha agent at his Court to a secret council, he told him, "I have

hitherto guarded the prestige and interests of Bāji Rāo because I cannot trust the Turks (*i.e.*, the Mughal royal house.) If the latter triumph over the Deccani forces, they will disregard us. Therefore, in every matter I shall follow the Peshwā's behest.'' He then (August 1735) sent a proposal to Bāji Rāo to come to him at the head of 5,000 horse, taking care not to plunder any place on the way. Jai Singh would pay the daily expenses of this force (Rs. 5,000) in addition to the *chauth* of Mālwa and the rent of Pilāji Jadav's *jāgir*,—a total of 20 *lakhs* in cash. After the Peshwā's arrival in Jaipur, Jai Singh would take counsel with him on the situation, secure assurances and oaths of safe-conduct from the Emperor through Khān-i-Daurān and then take the Peshwā to interview the Emperor. Otherwise, the Peshwā would return home from Jai Singh's country. (*S. P. D.*, xiv. 47.)

On the other side, at the end of September the Emperor formed his plan of operations against the Marāthas during the coming winter. He first reconciled Abhay Singh to the *wazir*. Agra, Mālwa, and even Gujrāt were proposed to be put in charge of the *wazir*, with orders not to molest Jai Singh's territory if he loyally joined the Emperor's cause with his own contingent; otherwise he was to be chastised as he deserved. It was

decided that as soon as the river levels would fall sufficiently low in autumn the Emperor himself would march out of Delhi, while Jai Singh and Khān-i-Daurān would proceed to the Deccan *via* Jaipur, and the *wazir* with Abhay Singh and Sādat Khān would take the route *via* Gwālior. (*S. P. D.*, xiv. 39.)

§ 11. *Bāji Rāo's visit to Rajputana, 1736.*

The agreement of 22nd March 1735 not having been ratified by the Emperor, Bāji Rāo planned a grand campaign in the north under his own command in the coming winter. He started from Punā on 9th October. The light forayers of Holkar in 1734 and 1735 had created terror throughout Rājputāna and given the people a close acquaintance with Marātha rapacity at their very doors. The failure of the entire force of the empire, led by the two highest officers of the State in the first quarter of 1735 had taught the Indian world to believe that the Marāthas were invincible and that no protection was to be looked for either from Delhi or from their own chiefs. The news of the coming of the dread master of the Marātha generals threw all Rājputāna into alarm and despair.* But Bāji Rāo's object was to visit the

* Tod, i. Mewar, Ch. 15, Maharana's letter to Biharidas Pancholi.

Rājput Courts personally and impose *chauth* by peaceful persuasion if possible.

After taking a fort named Kukshi on the Gujrat frontier of Dhār, the Peshwā advanced north through Dongarpur and Loniwādā, arriving at the southern frontier of Mewār (*c.* 15 January, 1736.) The Mahārānā made every arrangement for giving him a worthy reception. The ceremonial of the meeting was thus settled: the Mahārānā was to make a bow (*pranām*) to the Peshwā as a Brāhman, the holiest of all Hindu castes, while the latter as a priest was to bless the temporal ruler. Arrived near Udaipur, Bāji Rāo was lodged in the Champā-bāgh garden in the village of Ahar, and received a purse of Rs. 5,000, robes, horses and an elephant as welcome-gift to a guest. Next day a grand *darbār* was held by the Mahārānā, to which the Peshwā was called. Two cushions had been laid down side by side; the Mahārānā advanced to the door of the hall, welcomed the Peshwā, and led him to the cushion meant for him, but Bāji Rāo respectfully sat down below it on the floor, on a lower level than the Mahārānā. He waved the *chāmar* (fly whisker) over the Rājput's head, who protested saying, "*You* should be adored by us, being a Brāhman;" but Bāji Rāo diplomatically replied, "I count you

alone as king, for you have sixteen chiefs (*umārā*) under you."*

Then he proceeded to business. After long higgling, the Mahārānā had to sign a treaty promising to pay an annual tribute of Rs. 1,60,000, to cover which the Banhādā pargana was ceded to the Marāthas. This amount was divided into three equal shares, assigned to Holkar, Sindhia and Pawār. The management was at first entrusted to Holkar, but subsequently Sindhia acted as the receiver-general. This treaty remained in force for ten years, after which it became a nullity. (Tod, i. Mewar, Ch. 15.)

There was a breach while these negotiations were pending. The Mahārānā invited Bāji Rāo to visit his Jagmandir palace in the midst of the Picholā lake. Bāji Rāo took this to be a trap for murdering him, flew into a rage, and could be pacified only by the Mewār ministers agreeing to pay a fine of seven *lakhs!* Three *lakhs* out of this sum was paid in cash to Bāji Rāo, under the name of "gift of gold to a Brāhman at a funeral",

* A friend advised Bāji Rāo not to be too grasping in his dealings with the Maharana, adding, "You need not go to an extreme in your demands on the Ranaji. Act so as to keep him satisfied. You cannot grasp the whole world in one day." (*S.P.D.* xiv. 54.) *Vamsha Bh.*, 3236-8, gives these details, as well as those in the next two paragraphs. In Sanskrit a *Chakravarti* or Sovereign is defined as a king ruling over a circle of twelve sub-kings. *S.P.D.* xiv. 50, 51.

out of the property of the Mahārānā's grandmother, who had recently died.

Matters having been thus settled in Mewār, Bāji Rāo advanced north towards Jaipur, making a pilgrimage to Nāthdwārā (25 miles north of Udaipur) on the way. Thence he marched to Jahājpur (25 miles north-west of Bundi.) Jai Singh had hastened southwards with all his forces to meet him on the way. Their interview took place at the village of Bhambholāo* near Kishangarh. Jai Singh had asked from the Peshwā equality of honour with the Mahārānā, but Bāji Rāo told him that the lord of Udaipur was equal in status with his own king Shāhu as he had never owned the Muslim Pādishāh as master, while Jai Singh was a mere imperial *mansabdār*. A pavilion was pitched in the middle for the meeting while the two armies stood fully armed on the two sides, (*c*. 15 February.) The two chiefs descended from their elephants, embraced, and sat down on the same cushion, the Peshwā on the right and Jai Singh on the left. Bāji Rāo, in spite of his being a priest by caste and the prime minister of the greatest Hindu Rājah in India, had the manners of a moss-trooper, which had been anything but

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* The only name approaching this that I can find in the map near Kishangarh is *Bonabhao*, 7 m. due east of Pushkar and 13 m. s. w. of Kishangarh. (*Ind. Atlas*, 33 S. E.)

improved by his infatuation for Mastāni, a Muslim girl with the morals of a *vivandière*. He enjoyed his pipe, blowing the smoke into the face of his host. Now, the Jaipur Rājah, though a Rājput, was a man of refined tastes, and had consorted with scholarly Europeans. He did not enjoy this rough horseplay of the Deccani, but was powerless to check it. The Marātha captains were presented to Jai Singh one by one; only Malhar Holkar sulked in his tent, as Bāji Rāo did not now ask Jai Singh to restore Bundi to Budh Singh, although they had promised to Rājah Shāhu to do so when Pratāp Singh Hādā was at Satārā begging Marātha aid for him.

Then Jai Singh went back to his capital, telling Bāji Rāo that it was better for him to return to the Deccan as the time was not favourable for his intended attack on Delhi; he might come next year with better preparations. In the meantime, Jai Singh promised to use his influence at the imperial Court to secure for Rājah Shāhu the grant of *chauth* and the cession of Mālwa from the Emperor. From this point, Bāji Rāo retraced his steps to the Deccan, halting on the way at Begham (25 miles n.e. of Chitor), where he paid a visit to the dispossessed Budh Singh, in the company of Malhar and Pratāp Hādā, and spoke a few kind words to soothe his feelings. (*Vamsha*

Bh., 3238—3240; *S. P. D.*, xiv. 52, 56, xxii. 331, 333.)

§ 12. *Imperialists open peace negotiations with Baji Rao, 1736.*

In the meantime, while Bāji Rāo was still in Mewār (January), his agent Mahādev Bhat Hingané went to Jaipur and was introduced by the minister Ayā Mal (Rājāmal) to Jai Singh, who agreed to present the Peshwā with five *lakhs*,—two *lakhs* in cash and the balance in costly robes, jewellery, five horses and one elephant. The Rājah sent a message to Bāji Rāo inviting him to his dominions and promising to introduce him to the Emperor and arrange a lasting peace between the Mughal Government and the Marātha, by securing for the latter the grant of 20 *lakhs* in cash and a *jāgir* worth 40 *lakhs* a year in Mālwa, the subsidy being assigned on Dost Muhammad Khān of Bhopāl. With this offer, Ayā Mal went to Bāji Rāo's camp. Another Marātha wakil, Dādāji Pant, attended the camp of Khān-i-Daurān, negotiating through the medium of Rānoji Sindhia and Rāmchandra Bābā Shenvi. The Bakhshi sent Nejābat Ali Khān from his side with money to Bāji Rāo. (*S. P. D.*, xiv. 50, 51.)

In short, as Bāji Rāo wrote to his mother, the Emperor and his councillors were eager to

make friends with him. He himself had no armed conflict anywhere. A state of war had existed between his generals and the imperial officers (especially Muhammad Khān Bangash) in the country south of Dholpur. But as soon as peace overtures were received from Delhi through Jai Singh, Bāji Rāo sent out orders (7th Feb.) to his officers to suspend hostilities. The Marātha detachment in Jodhpur territory* was recalled. Khān-i-Daurān at first proposed to come from Delhi and meet the Peshwā, but evidently he did not, and the negotiations were opened on behalf of the Emperor by Yādgār Kashmiri, Kripā Rām

* Malhar and Rānoji marched to Merta, guided by Pratāp S. Hādā. Pratap at first visited Ummed Singh Sisodia of Shāhpurā (acting as Abhay Singh's agent) and the *bhāndāri* (Marwar minister) within the city and discussed terms with them. But no ransom having been agreed upon, Pratap returned to the Maratha camp and hostilities were begun. On the first day the Marathas captured the town, which was totally deserted, the inhabitants having fled to the fort. Then siege was laid to the fort and trenches carried towards its walls. The garrison made repeated sorties on the trenches, each side losing some officers of note in the encounters. The Marathas were bombarded from the fort walls and driven out of the outermost trench of the defenders which they had occupied after the retirement of the Rajputs from it. Heavy exchange of fire went on from day to day. [*S.P.D.*, xiv. 14. This letter was written by Malhar and Ranoji from their camp before Merta, to the Peshwa, and is dated by the editor, in a correction, 1st April 1736. But as Sambhar was sacked on 28 Feb. 1735, that year is more likely for this letter, and the date should be 12th April, 1735; but the day of the week given in the latter agrees only with 1734.]

and Nejābat Ali Khān, who left Delhi on 8 March. Bāji Rāo next went into Ahirwādi (north-east of Sironj), sending his agent Bābu Rāo to Delhi, on whose return with a reply from the imperial Court the Peshwā set out for the Deccan (end of April, 1736.) (*S. P. D.*, xiv. 51, 56, 58, 52; *Siyar*, ii. 84; *Later Mughals*, ii. 284.)

§ 13. *Campaign of early 1736; imperialists defeated.*

We shall here briefly survey the campaigns in the three theatres, Mālwa, Bundelkhand and Eastern Rājputānā, which were ended early by these peace talks. At the close of 1735, the Peshwā's brother Chimnāji advanced with a large army towards Gwālior by way of Sironj and Bundelkhand. Pilāji Jādav came from the south to support him and was left in charge of the operations. Muhammad Khān Bangash, the *subahdār* of Allahabad, was ordered to proceed to the defence of Mālwa. The fort of Gwālior successfully held out under a contingent of Pathāns sent by him. Leaving that fort untaken, a Maratha division under Bāji Bhimrāo proceeded to Nurābād, 15 miles north of it, and made it their base for some weeks, and advancing still further reached Syliā, 7 miles n.w. of Nurābād and only four or five miles from the Chambal river.

In the meantime, Muhammad Khān Bangsh had reached Dholpur on 14th January 1736 and taken post in the ravines of the Chambal, guarding every ford against the invaders. The Marātha leaders halted at Syliā for about ten days, daily sending out cavalry patrols to the river to watch for Muhammad Khān. But in fear of the Marāthas, "he would not once come out of his hole in the sands of the river," and there could be no fight with him. Bāji Bhimrāo then surprised and sacked the village of Bāgohini (11 miles w. of Syliā), the stronghold of a robber chieftain (clan Sikarbār.) When this division fell back towards Gwālior, Muhammad Khān ventured out of the bed of the Chambal and entrenched in the ravines that intersect the narrow fork between that river and the Koāri (immediately south of the Chambal), throwing up mud walls and mounting guns. Behind these he sheltered himself, refusing to accept the challenge to sally forth and fight the Marāthas when they reappeared before him. Thus the whole month of January and the earlier part of February were passed in inaction on the Mughal side, after which envoys came from the Bangash for terms and finally hostilities were suspended by order of the Peshwā (received by Bhimrāo on 1st March) as the Delhi Court had inclined towards peace. Then the invaders

withdrew from Mālwa (March 1736.) Before this a small Marātha force had crossed the Jamunā and made a dash into the Gangetic *doāb,* raiding some places in the Etāwa and Cawnpur districts, but it retired shortly afterwards; Bāji Rāo also wrote (end of February) forbidding these provocations. (*S. P. D.,* xiv. 55, 56; xiii. 48; *Later Mughals,* ii. 281-282.)

In Bundelkhand, the wazir's division advanced by way of Narwar to the Arjal lake, 12 miles east of Orchhā, where he entrenched and faced Pilāji Jādav during the month of fasting (January.) There were frequent skirmishes between the patrols. At last on 3rd February, Pilāji delivered an attack, but after an all-day battle he fell back at night and made a rapid retreat to the Deccan, the Mughals following in search of him, but at a great distance behind, up to Ujjain. (*Lat. Mug.* ii. 282-283.)

In the western theatre, Khān-i-Daurān was sent to expel the Marāthas from Rājputānā. Joined by Jai Singh, he prepared a strongly entrenched position at Todā Tonk, facing Malhar and his ally Pratāp Hādā. The imperialists were here immobilised for many weeks, and one day a foraging party from their camp, 1,500 strong, was almost totally cut off. Then in February the

peace negotiations put an end to the operations,* the Marāthas went away and the two Mughal generals were liberated. (*Later Mughals*, ii. 283-284.)

§ 14. *Baji Rao invades Northern India, 1737-38.*

Throughout the year 1737 a severe famine due to failure of rain and the exhaustion of last year's harvest, raged in Bundelkhand and the north-eastern parts of Malwa, up to the Jamuna river. The water-sources on the way dried up and no food for man or horse could be had anywhere before the new crop ripened. (*S. P. D.*, xiv. 52, xv. 8.) Next year, 1738, the famine desolated the Aurangabad and Ahmadnagar region in the Deccan (xv. 63.) No real settlement could be effected through the peace-negotiations conducted by Jai Singh as mediator. He induced the Emperor to appoint Bāji Rāo as deputy governor of Malwa, with Jai Singh himself as the nominal *subahdār*. "This was, in effect, though not in form, a cession of the province. As to the other

* Irvine's statement. (ii. 284) that Jai Singh and Bāji Rāo met at Dholpur on 8th Rabi I 1149 (6 July 1736, O.S.) is impossible, as we know from the Peshwā's records (*S.P.D.* xxii. 333) that he re-entered Puna on 24th June 1736. Here Irvine's Persian authorities have made a confusion of years. A Peshwā did meet Jai Singh on 8th Rabi I, but it was in the year 1154 (=13 May 1741) and the Peshwā was Bālāji Rāo. (*S.P.D.* xxi. 2.)

concessions the only one agreed to was the hereditary appointment (of Rājah Shāhu) as *sardesh-pāndya* in the six provinces of Mughal Deccan; . . . . the rate of payment was five per cent. of the revenue." (*Lat. Mugh.*, ii. 284-285.) This did not satisfy the Marathas, and responding to Jai Singh's secret invitation Bāji Rāo issued from Punā on 12th November, 1736, to carry the war to the gates of Delhi. (*Vam. Bh.*, 240; *S. P. D.*, xxii. 341.)

The campaign in Bhadāur, the ravage of the Gangetic *doab* in March 1737, Sādat Khan's defeat of Malhar and Satvoji Jādav at Jālesar on 13th March—which according to the Marāthā despatches was greatly exaggerated by the imperialists, Bāji Rao's cavalry dash upon the environs of Delhi and sack of Kālkā-devi (30th March), the terror of the capital and Court, the rout of the imperialists at Tāl Katorā, the *wazir's* victory at Bādshāhpur (31st March), the sudden retreat of Bāji Rāo to Rājputānā, the coming of the Nizām to the Emperor's aid (2nd July), his fight with Bāji Rāo near Bhopāl (December), and the humiliating treaty made by him with the Marāthas at Dorāha,* have been described in detail

* 6th January 1738, promising to grant to Bāji Rao (1) the whole of Malwa, (2) the complete sovereignity of the territory between the Narmada and the Chambal, (3) to obtain confirmation

in Irvine's *Later Mughals*, ii. 286-306, on the basis of the Persian authorities, with information from the Marāthi sources then available added by me in the form of notes to that work.

This expedition did not affect Rājputānā except that while Bāji Rāo was investing the Nizām at Bhopāl in December 1737, Safdar Jang and Mahārāo Durjan Sāl Hādā of Kotā, marching to the relief of the Nizām, were intercepted and defeated by Malhar Holkar and Jaswant Pawār. For his unfriendly act the Mahārāo now felt the heavy hand of the Marāthas. After the Nizām had made terms and retreated to Delhi, Bāji Rāo with Malhar Holkar and Jaswant Pawār marched from Bhopāl to Kotā, laid siege to the fort, and "utterly devastated that district by plunder", (January 1738.) Durjan Sāl fled to fort Gangroni and made peace by promising to pay a fine of ten *lakhs*. Eight *lakhs* were paid down (by 10 Feb.) and a bond was signed for the remaining two *lakhs*.*

Towards the close of this year, 1738, the Indian sky began to be overcast by the shadow of

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thereof from the Emperor, and (4) to use his best endeavours to obtain 50 lakhs of Rupees to pay Bāji Rao's expenses.

* *Later Mughals*, ii. 304. *S.P.D.*, XV. 68, xxii. 120. For more than a year afterwards this balance remained unpaid. *Vam. Bh.*, 3249, says that Kotā was bombarded for 40 days, at the end of which this contribution was promised.

Nādir Shāh's invasion, and there were no organised raids of the Marāthas into Mālwa and Rājputānā in the winter of 1738-39. Nādir's invasion shook the Delhi empire to its foundations, and after his return there was no more attempt to restore imperial authority in Mālwa. Muhammad Shāh by a *farmān* (1741) officially appointed the new Peshwā Bālāji Rāo deputy governor of Mālwa. This was, in effect, the final loss of that province to the empire.

15. *How imperial negotiations with Baji Rao broke down.*

When the imperial officers made overtures for peace during the campaign of 1735, Bāji Rāo wrote to the Emperor making the following demands :

(1) The grant of the *subahdāri* of Mālwa and its entire territory excluding its forts held directly of the Emperor, and the lands of *jāgirdārs*, old feudatories, and grantees of rent-free lands and daily allowances.

(2) A cash contribution of 13 *lakhs* of Rupees to the Peshwā for his war expenses of the first year, to be paid in three instalments, namely 4 *lakhs* when Pilaji Jādav comes to the imperial Court and settles the treaty, 5 *lakhs* at the autumn harvest, and 4 *lakhs* at the spring harvest.

(3) The *nazar* of 6 *lakhs* of Rupees which

King Shāhu had agreed to pay to the Emperor in return for the grant of the *sardesh-pāndya* rights of the six imperial provinces in the Deccan, was to be paid one-fourth down, and the remaining three-quarters by instalments after Shāhu had actually brought the country under his control.

In addition, Bābu Rāo, the special Marātha envoy sent to Delhi, asked for a grant of 2 *lakhs* of Rupees as reward to Chimnāji (the Peshwā's brother) for having been "a devoted servant of this Government and persuaded Bāji Rāo in many ways to accept the policy of furthering the Emperor's interests." This amount was to be paid, one-half on Pilāji's arrival at Delhi and the other half at the spring harvest after the agreement had been concluded. Against each of the above demands the Emperor wrote "Granted" (*manzur*.)

But every such concession was taken by Bāji Rāo as a sign of weakness. At the increasing evidence of the helplessness of the Delhi Government in each successive season, Bāji Rāo rose in his demands, till at last he claimed :

(1) The expulsion of Yār Muhammad Khān from Bhopāl with the aid of the imperial forces and the bestowal of his estate on Bāji Rāo.

(2) A *jāgir* of 50 *lakhs* a year in the 6 Deccan *subahs* to the Peshwā, (the Emperor's son being appointed the absentee *subahdār* of that country).

In addition, Bāji Rāo was to get half the revenue that might be collected for the Emperor through his exertions in the Deccan.

(3) The entire Tanjore kingdom to Rājah Shāhu.

(4) Forts Māndu, Dhār, and Rāisin in Mālwa to the Peshwā for keeping his family in.

(5) The entire country northwards up to the Chambal river to be granted in *jāgir* to the Peshwā, he promising not to molest the lands of the Rājahs of this region if they submitted and paid their tributes.

(6) The imperial feudatories in Mālwa and Bundelkhand were to pay Bāji Rāo contributions totalling 10 *lakhs* and 5 thousand Rupees.

(7) All arrangements in the Deccan must be made only through the medium of the Peshwā.

(8) A prompt order on the Bengal *subahdār* to pay 50 *lakhs* to Bāji Rāo, who was very much involved in debt.

(9) The granting of *jāgirs* to the Peshwā at Allahabad, Benāres, Gayā, and Mathurā, (so that he might hold the greatest pilgrim centres of the Hindus.)

(10) For his personal visit to the Emperor, Bāji Rāo would first go to Agra, whence he would be conducted by Amir Khan and Jai Singh to Delhi and presented to the Emperor during a ride

(and not at a *darbār*), and soon afterwards given leave to return home.

(11) Fifteen *lakhs* of Rupees to be paid to Bāji Rāo thus : five *lakhs* when he would reach Mālwa, five when he visited the Emperor, and five at the end of the year.

On 29th September 1736, Muhammad Shāh issued an imperial *farmān* bestowing on Bāji Rāo some *jāgirs*, a *mansab* (seven-*hazāri* personal rank), the *mahals* of his *watan* (home estate) and right to perquisites, as well as a robe of honour made up of seven pieces, aigrette (*jigha*) for the turban, and an ornament (*sarpech*) to be tied round the head,—bidding him serve the empire as a loyal officer. He was also invited to visit the Emperor in person like other imperial vassals and servants.

§ 16. *Malwa ceded to Balaji Rao in 1741.*

But Bāji Rāo's insatiable ambition made the conclusion of peace impossible. The Emperor naturally refused to grant his exorbitant new demands. Thus, the dispute with the Delhi Government remained unsettled during the rest of Bāji Rāo's life. On his death (28th April 1740), his eldest son Bālāji Rāo succeeded as Peshwā, after defeating the intrigues of Raghuji Bhonslé to keep him out of that office. The new Peshwā's diplomacy and tact (seconded, it must be con-

fessed, by the utter disintegration of the imperial Government through Nādir's invasion) succeeded where the blustering tactics of his father had failed. Bālāji set out for the north in March 1741 and reached Gwālior. Jai Singh, the *subahdār* of Agra, reported to the Emperor that the captains under him were quite inexperienced in Deccani warfare and therefore force would fail. He then sent envoys to open peace negotiations with Bālāji Rāo, telling him to remain contented with the *subahs* of Gujrāt and Mālwa and not to disturb any other province. The Peshwā replied that though the *chauth* of the whole of Hindustān was his due, he would be satisfied with the above two *subahs*, provided that an imperial rescript was issued legally conferring them on him. At the same time, to save the Emperor's face, a petition was submitted by Bālāji, professing his loyalty to the throne and declaring himself a devoted servant of the Emperor. Following Jai Singh's advice, Muhammad Shāh in reply issued a *farmān*, dated 4th July 1741, bestowing the deputy governorship (*nāib subahdāri*) of Mālwa on the Peshwā. This was another device for disguising the fulness of the imperial surrender and saving the Emperor's face. (*Chahār Gulzār*, 376*a*-377*a*; *S. P. D.*, xv. 86.)

Bālāji Rāo visited Jai Singh near Dholpur on

12th May, the latter returned the visit on the 15th, and the Peshwā started on his return home on the 20th. Early in July the arrival of the above *farmān* confirmed the peace.* (*S. P. D.*, xxi. 2.)

Mālwa thus ceased to be a part of the empire of Delhi.

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* Bālāji Rāo on his part gave the following written undertaking :—(1) To visit the Emperor. (2) No Marātha was to cross the Narmadā; if any one did it, the Peshwā held himself responsible for his acts. (3) Not to disturb any province except Mālwa. (4) Not to ask ever in future for any money above what was granted already. (5) One Marātha general at the head of 500 horse was to serve constantly in the Emperor's army. (6) When the imperialists issued on any campaign, the Peshwā would join them with 4,000 men. If the Emperor asked for the aid of more men, these additional troops were to be paid their subsistence by the Delhi Government. (*S.P.D.*, xv. page 97.)

CHAPTER VII.

RAJPUTANA, 1741—1751.

§ 1. *Battle of Gangwāna, 1741; Last days of Jai Singh.*

The invasion of Nādir Shah dealt such a shattering blow to the Empire of Delhi that after it the imperial authority was totally eliminated from Rājputana in all but the name. The Rājput princes were left entirely to themselves, to wrangle and fight within the confines of their own country, with the result of establishing a new master, the Marāthas, as the arbiter of their destinies. This change was rendered easier because in the course of the next eleven years all the last Rājput princes who had counted for anything in imperial politics were removed from the scene,—Sawāi Jai Singh in 1743, Abhay Singh in 1749, and Ishwari Singh in 1750. The smaller men who succeeded them and who could not look up to any great suzerain for support, were naturally powerless to make a stand against the Marathas.

Maharajah Abhay Singh of Jodhpur became in his later years intoxicated with pride from his defeat of Sarbuland Khan and accumulation of

riches in the *subah* of Gujrāt of which he was viceroy. The Rajah of Bikānir, representing a junior but independent branch of the Rāthor clan, was nominally subordinate to the Maharajah of Mārwār as the head of his clan. Abhay Singh declared war on him for some slight offence and led an army to besiege his capital. Bakht Singh, the younger brother of Abhay Singh, ever on the watch for an opportunity to overthrow his brother, induced Jai Singh of Jaipur to champion the cause of Bikānir. Jai Singh in his cups sent a letter of threat to Abhay Singh, bidding him raise the siege, and the latter replied with defiance saying that it was a purely domestic quarrel between two Rāthor families and no business of the Kachhwā chieftain. War followed between the two States, and Jai Singh hastened from Agra to the defence of his own realm, because Bakht Singh had suddenly changed his policy out of regard for the honour of his own clan and made a raid into Jaipur territory, plundering many villages. A levee *en masse* of Jaipur vassals and allies, including Hādās, Jādavs of Kerāuli, Sisodias of Shāhpurā, Khichi Chauhāns and Jāts, as well as three Muslim generals who had been sent by the Emperor to Agra to assist Jai Singh in keeping the Marāthas out of the North, marched by way of Ajmir towards Mārwār. With this vast but

disjointed host of a hundred thousand men, Jai Singh reached Gangwānā, 11 miles north-east of the Pushkar lake, and encamped, with his guns planted in front. The Marwar army was hopelessly outnumbered. But Bakht Singh, at the head of only one thousand Rāthor horsemen, desperate like himself, charged the enemy, swept through the line of guns, and fell upon Jai Singh's troops, "like tigers among a flock of sheep." Nothing could stand their onset.* Many thousands of the Jaipur troops were slain and many more wounded, mostly without fighting. The Kachhwā army fled away, and within four hours the field, covering some square miles, was entirely cleared as by magic of all save the dead and the wounded.

Jai Singh fell back two miles and stood for some time almost alone and in perplexity. The three imperial generals, who had not been attacked, coolly kept their places in the field ('near Pahāri'), though their followers had caught the panic and

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* The best account of this battle is by the eye-witness Harcharandas in *Chahār Gulzār*, 377b-379b. Date in *Vir Vinod*, (new style, which I have adjusted to old style.) *Vam. Bh.* 3304-3312, Tod, (ii. Marwar ch. 11.) Harcharan exaggerates the casualties as 12,000 slain and the same number wounded. He gives a horrid picture of the battlefield as it looked when he walked among the dead the next day. A similar desperate charge was made by Rathor horsemen upon the still more modern and powerful artillery of De Boigne near Mairta on 11 Sep. 1790, with the same butchery. (Tod, ii. Personal Narrative, ch. 29.)

fled away, leaving only a hundred men out of nearly ten thousand to support them. By this time Bakht Singh's gallant band had been reduced from a thousand to seventy men only and he himself was wounded. Just then the three imperial generals, who had formed a rallying centre for more of their men, fired their rockets on Bakht Singh and his group. This unexpected renewal of attack on a field which he believed to have been won and where he could see no enemy before him, was more than what he and his small remnant of Rāthors could bear; so he turned the rein for his stronghold of Nāgor. Jai Singh, thus miraculously saved from a field where his army had reaped nothing but shame, took the road to his capital. This battle was fought on 28th May 1741, and was shortly followed by peace between the two States.

§ 2. *Ishwari Singh's struggles with his brother.*

This was the last battle at which Jai Singh was present. He died on 21st September 1743 and was succeeded by his eldest son Ishwari Singh, whose reign of seven years was one long struggle with his younger brother Mādho Singh and Mādho Singh's supporters, Rajput and Marātha. Shortly after Jai Singh's death Mahārānā Jagat Singh of Mewār took the field to wrest the Jaipur

throne for his nephew Mādho Singh and advanced to the village of Jāmoli, 5 miles south-west of Jahājpur (which is 11 miles south of Deoli cantonment), at the end of 1743. Here he halted for 40 days, a Jaipur force facing him; but no battle took place and peace was finally made by Ishwari Singh promising to give his brother a large appanage. [*Vam. Bh.* 3328 puts the annual yield of the promised estate at 5 *lakhs* and the Marathi letters at 24 *lakhs* of Rupees.] But Mādho Singh would be content with nothing less than half his father's heritage, for we find him often afterwards rising against his elder brother. Early in February 1745 one such attempt was nipped in the bud, when the Maratha partisans of Ishwari Singh surprised the Mahārānā's camp at midnight, fired into it and put the Mewār troops to flight at dawn. Mādho Singh and his uncle escaped to Udaipur and Ishwari Singh repudiated his former agreement.*

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* *Vamsha Bhāskar,* 3380. This work (written about 1835) says that the Mahārānā was released by the Marāthas only on promising them 22 *lakhs* of Rupees. But Marāthi records show this to be an error. What the Mahārānā did was to send his agent Kanirām to Malhar, promising most solemnly to pay the Marāthas a reward of 20 *lakhs* of Rupees if they could secure for Mādho Singh a *jāgir* of 24 *lakhs* a year from Ishwari Singh. To induce the Peshwā to accept the offer, Malhar informed him that Safdar Jang and Āmir Khān were on the side of Mādho Singh, so that the Emperor and his Court were not likely to be antagonised towards the

In 1747 an unprecedentedly severe famine raged throughout Rājputānā and Western India. There was an utter failure of the seasonal rains; no crop could grow; the water-courses dried up; not a green blade could be seen anywhere; month after month a dusty haze covered the horizon and never a drop of rain or dew. The cattle perished for want of fodder and men from the dearth of grain. As a Marātha observer wrote, "Men, it seems, cannot get even water for washing their faces. The whole country has been desolated. Even Udaipur is gone; the Mahārānā has decided to vacate his city and go to the bank of the Dhebār lake and live there" [*S. P. D.* xxi. 19.] Ummed Singh was driven to sell his best elephant to meet his wants. In Gujrāt this famine was popularly known as *Trilotra* (*i.e.*, that of the Vikram year 1803) and the people ate up the seeds of grass and died of flux in consequence; many villages were utterly depopulated and remained untenanted for years afterwards. [*Mirāt-i-Ahmadi*, ii. 364—366. *Vam. Bh.*, 3446—'49.] And yet the Rājputs did not cease their fratricidal contests. Ishwari Singh kept up his army on a war footing on the strength

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Marāthas by their partisanship of Mādho Singh. [*S.P.D.*, xxvii. 18 and 19. These letters are conjecturally dated by the editor August 1746, but seem to have been written several months earlier. The subject is continued in *Aiti. Patra.* ii. 68 and 76.]

of his purse and the Mahārānā in reliance on the Peshwā's backing. [*S. P. D.*, ii. 4.]

Ummed Singh Hādā (the dispossessed heir of Bundi) and Mādho Singh (the defeated claimant to the throne of Jaipur) met the Mahārānā at Nāthdwārā on 4th Oct. 1746, and formed plans for avenging their late defeats at the hands of Ishwari Singh. They sent agents to Kālpi to hire the troops of Malhar Rāo Holkar, offering him two *lakhs* of Rupees. Malhar, against the advice of his colleagues Rānoji Sindhia and Rāmchandra Bābā Shenvi, sent his son Khande Rāo at the head of a thousand horse to support these three Rājput chiefs and enforce the following demands which the allies were agreed upon, namely that Ishwari Singh should (i) cede the four parganas of Tonk Todā Mālpura and Newāi to Mādho Singh, (ii) restore Bundi to Ummed Singh Hādā on condition of his becoming an ally of Ishwari Singh in future and paying the war expenses of the Marāthas, and (iii) allow the three parganas of Nenwé Samidhi and Karwar to be held by Rāo Rajah Durjan Sāl of Kotā and Pratāp Singh Hādā (heir of Karwar.) [*S. P. D.*, ii. 3.]

§ 3. *Battle of Rajmahal, March 1747.*

Marching from Kālpi into Rājputānā, Khande Rāo was joined at Udaipur by the contingent of

Durjan Sāl of Kotā (patron of Ummed Singh) and the Mewār forces. The allied army, thus swollen to vast numbers, crossed the Jaipur frontier and reached Rājmahal (ten miles north of Deoli cantonment and south of a bend in the Banās river) where Ishwari Singh's general Nārāyan-dās confronted it. The rival armies encamped two miles apart. Meantime efforts at peace were made both from Delhi and Jaipur. Ishwari Singh's counsellors and even his general Nārāyandās,—who had hastened alone from the front to the capital at the pacific appeal of the Udaipur minister,—urged him to avoid an engagement and try negotiations for peace, lest the Mahārānā and the Marāthas should be made enemies for ever by an armed conflict. But Ishwari Singh decided to hasten to his frontier and beat the invaders before the Mahārānā could come up and swell their number. He transferred the command of his advanced division to Haragovind Nātāni, a tradesman by caste but an exceptionally brave and able general, and himself arrived with the reserve one day's march behind the fighting front.

The battle* began at noon on Sunday the 1st of March 1747 and ended at sunset the next day.

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* Rajmahal: *S.P.D.*, ii. 3, 4, xxi. 24. *Vam. Bh.* 3460-'68 (year wrong.)

The allies were completely defeated, though both sides suffered heavily. Each contingent of this ill-knit confederate army had been attacked and routed in succession through the skilful planning and personal leadership of Haragovind. The only stand was made by a Kotā vassal, the laird of Koilāpur-Patan. Mādho Singh's standard-bearing elephant and band, all his artillery and camp-baggage, were captured by the Jaipur troops. At night the victors slept in the deserted camp of the Mewār army. During the battle, Khande Rāo, who in the usual Marātha manner had stood apart watching for an opportunity to plunder, fell upon the Jaipur camp in conjunction with Bhopat-rām Chāran, the Hādā general, but was repulsed by the Shekhāwat guard, though after looting some property.

From the lost field, Durjan Sāl fled to Kotā, and Khande Rāo retreated to Bundelkhand. The Mahārānā who was coming up in support, turned rein from the way, on hearing of the disaster, and sought refuge in his capital.

It was a great victory. Ishwari Singh arrived on the scene after the fight and took up the pursuit. Mewār now felt the heavy hand of the victor; its rich trade-centre at Bhilwārā was captured and the merchants held to ransom. The Mahārānā then begged for peace, which was granted and

Ishwari Singh returned in triumph to his own capital (April 1747.) A continuation of the war was impossible; grain was selling at famine prices and even a bundle of grass cost a Rupee; the Mahārānā's war expenses had run up to Rs. 12,000 a day and his sterile dominion could not bear the burden longer. [*Vam. Bh.*, 3472.]

Towards the end of this year Ishwari Singh was appealed to by the Emperor to come to his aid for repelling the Abdāli invasion from the north-west. The Mahārājah demanded the imperial fort of Rantambhor as the price of his support, and when it was refused he lingered on the way at Mathura for weeks together, arriving at Delhi only on 24th December 1747. In the battle with the Abdāli at Mānupur (11th March 1748) he turned tail at the very beginning of the fighting and fled precipitately back to his own country, throwing his guns and kettledrums into wells to lighten his baggage! All the credit he had gained by his victory at Rajmahal was thus lost, and he shut himself up as if dumb-foundered in his capital. [*S. P. D.*, xxvii. 30.]

§ 4. *How the Marātha Government agreed to support Madho Singh.*

But even at home danger sought him out. He was overwhelmed by a Marātha force acting for

his younger brother, only a few months after his return from the Panjab campaign.

The tangled web of Kachhwa-Maratha diplomacy can be now unloosened and laid out in clear outlines with the help of the contemporary Marathi letters, though some self-inconsistency naturally occurs in them as the terms demanded and offered varied from time to time. We have seen how Ishwari Singh shortly after his accession had to patch up a peace with the Mahārānā by promising to give his younger brother an appanage of 24 *lakhs* of Rupees a year (1743), and that in February 1745 he had bought the help of some Marātha generals in Northern India (notably Ramchandra Baba) and routed the Maharana's forces, and then refused to fulfil his promise. Next, Malhar Holkar had been bribed by Madho Singh to espouse his cause and detach a force from his contingent to support Madho Singh in 1747, but the attempt had ended in utter failure at Rajmahal (March.) This victory made Ishwari Singh inordinately proud and his brother could expect nothing from him thereafter. So, the Maharana's envoy had gone to Punā and entreated the Marātha Court to exact from Ishwari Singh the fulfilment of his first promise, offering Shāhu a tribute of ten lakhs or more for this service.

The Peshwa had been originally Ishwari

Singh's supporter. But he now (7th March 1747) instructed Rāmchandra Bābā to press Ishwari Singh to cede to Mādho Singh 24 *lakhs* worth of territory, if the latter prince paid a subsidy of 15 *lakhs*, on the ground that "thus both the princes would be preserved and our interests would be served." Rāmchandra Bābā rightly protested against this line of action as futile and lacking any foundation on reality. He urged, "We shall get no money out of it. Our king took up Ishwari Singh's cause and by his order I went and helped him. If you now turn against Ishwari Singh, we shall lose all credit [for sincerity] among the public."

Despairing of getting help for his nephew from the Peshwā, the Maharana tried to gain the support of the imperial Court and also began to collect Rāthor and Hādā allies for the purpose. He completely won Malhar Holkar over, who again and again pressed Madho Singh's cause on the Peshwa, with passionate partisanship and even gave a personal guarantee for the payment of Madho Singh's promised tribute. Thus Malhar and his diwān Rāmchandra Bābā were moving at cross-purposes. The Peshwa strongly deprecated such a conflict of policy in the Marātha camp in Hindustan as destructive of the Maratha position and interests there, and urged unity of action in

future. [*Aitihāsik Patr.* ii. 68 and 76.] He very wisely ordered Holkar and Rāmchandra Bābā to try every possible means of accommodating this family quarrel by persuading Ishwari Singh to cede the promised territory to his younger brother, instead of letting this fratricidal contest run its fatal course.

When the demand of 24 lakhs worth of territory for Mādho was placed before Ishwari Singh, he was rightly indignant at the Peshwā's partisanship of his rival and especially at his intervention in a domestic dispute of the Kachhwā royalty, and wrote in reply, "There is a unique and hereditary friendship between the Peshwā and myself. Bālāji Rāo cannot imagine how thick my father was with his and what services he rendered to Bāji Rāo. Even now I do not deviate from the Peshwā's request. But this question is one of inheritance of ancestral property. We are Rajahs and must follow our hereditary usage. It is a case of territory; how can I oblige him in this? I had previously given Mādho Singh what Malhar had pressed me to give him on the ground of service to the State. He now asks for more. How can I give him without fighting? How can I bring down upon myself the name of a coward and an unworthy son by dividing my entire kingdom with a younger brother? The Peshwā

and Malhar want more territory to be given to Mādho Singh than before; but it cannot be done. God alone gives kingdoms. He exchanged turbans [with Malhar], the fruit of which pact he has witnessed by this time." [*S. P. D.* ii. 11, xxvii. 26 and 18-19, xxi. 17.]

In May 1748, the Peshwā entered Jaipur territory. Madho Singh and other Rajput chiefs joined him, thus swelling his forces to an enormous host. Ishwari Singh lay crushed under the disgrace of his flight from the field of Mānupur; his country was utterly devastated by the Maratha soldiery; and the Peshwā was now high in favour at the imperial Court, so that the Jaipur Rajah had not a single friend anywhere. He therefore assumed a very submissive attitude and sent his minister Keshavdas to the Peshwā to beg for peace. The Marātha demanded a contribution of 50 *lakhs* of Rupees, while Ishwari Singh could not rise above half that sum. The Marātha even proposed to divide the Jaipur State into two equal halves to be held by the two brothers. To this Ishwari Singh could not possibly agree, and so war ensued. On condition of being secured the four mahals of Tonk, Todā, Mālpurā (including Fāgi) and Barwāda in Newāi from Ishwari Singh as his appanage, Mādho Singh agreed to pay the Marātha

Rājah a *nazar* of 10 *lakhs* of Rupees. Malhar gave his king a written undertaking for the amount, payable in four instalments during 1749-50, this Maratha general being allowed to occupy that territory till the payment was completed [29th April 1748. Vad, iii. pp. 140-141. *S. P. D.* xxvii. 30, 26, 18, 19; ii. 11; xxi. 17.]

§ 5. *Battle of Bagru, August 1748.*

In July 1748 a Marātha army under Malhar Holkar and Gangādhar Tātyā entered Jaipur territory near Uniārā, wrested Tonk, Todā and Mālpurā, and gave these places to Mādho Singh. As they advanced by way of Piplod, Fāgi and Ladānā, some Kachhwā vassals waited on Mādho Singh and did him homage, and several other petty Rājput chiefs joined him, besides the two Hadas Ummed and Durjan Sāl. None seemed able to resist this confederacy of seven States, till they reached Bagru (23 miles east of Sambhar town.) Here Ishwari Singh himself faced them. The battle began on 1st August with an artillery duel, then the soldiers grappled at close quarters. Finally a heavy shower of rain put an end to the fighting for that day. The night was spent by general and private alike in the greatest hardship. Next morning the battle was renewed, with heavy

slaughter but no decisive result. On the third day Gangādhar Tātyā fell upon the guns of the Jaipur rear-guard and drove nails into their port-holes. But Suraj Mal Jat, an ally of Ishwari Singh, made a counter-attack and drove the Marāthas back. In the van the Jāts maintained a bloody even fight with Holkar's division.

The battle raged for six days, frequently amidst showers of rain, which however did not suspend it. During this period a convoy of provisions coming to the Jaipur army was intercepted by the Marāthas, who cut off the noses and ears of the porters. A Marātha detachment of 5000 horse under Gangādhar blocked the road to Jaipur in the rear of Ishwari Singh and plundered his country up to the Sambhar lake. Ishwari Singh took refuge in the fort of Bagru, amidst the greatest hardship. Terms were thereafter quickly settled through the exertions of Keshav-dās (the son of Rajah Ayā Mal) who bribed Gangādhar Tātyā to soften the obstinacy of Malhar Rao. Ishwari Singh agreed to give five parganas to his brother and to restore Bundi to Ummed Singh. On 9th August, Ishwari Singh met Holkar and his captains as well as Ummed Singh, and they swore to mutual friendship. Then the Marāthas and their associates began a retreat on the 10th, and

Ishwari Singh set out for his capital on the following day.*

The year 1749 passed uneventfully for Jaipur, but the first half of the next year was clouded by the invasion of Rajputana by the imperial Paymaster Salābat Khan on behalf of Bakht Singh, the claimant to the throne of Jodhpur, the history of which will be narrated a little later in connection with Mārwār affairs. In September 1750, Ishwari Singh was besought by Sāmant Singh, the chief of Rupnagar, to help him in recovering that city from his younger brother Bahādur Singh who had seized it. The two allies went to Rupnagar, where Sāmant Singh begged for more troops and artillery to lay siege to it. But he was unable to pay the war expenses and Ishwari Singh came back to his capital, leaving only two or three hundred horsemen under his captain Kripā-rām (a *baniā*) with Sāmant Singh. Sāmant occupied the environs, while Bahādur Singh (secretly backed

* *Vam. Bh.* 3493-3525. *Sujān Charita*, ii. Jang. Tod, (ii. Haravati, ch. 4) is more than usually imaginative in saying that from the field of Bagru, "Ishwari Singh retreated to the castle of Bagru . . . where after a siege of ten days he was forced to sign a deed for the surrender of Bundi to Ummed . . . Rajah Ishwari could not survive his disgrace and terminated his existence by poison . . . while rejoicings were making [at Bundi] to celebrate the installation of Ummed." As a matter of fact, Ishwari Singh committed suicide *two years and four months after* the battle of Bagru. No Marathi record of this battle has been found.

by Bakht Singh) held the capital. [*S. P. D.* ii. 17, 23.]

§ 6. *Maratha invasion of Jaipur; suicide of Ishwari Singh.*

At the end of 1750 Jaipur received a new and most disastrous visitation of the Marāthas and saw a revolution in its affairs. In 1745 Ishwari Singh had outbid his rivals and hired the Marātha generals (excepting Holkar) to aid him in his struggle with the Mahārānā and Mādho Singh. At Bagru (1747) he had promised a vast indemnity to buy off Malhar. These amounts fell into arrear and, as the Marātha collector complained, his dunning produced no effect; "this Government pays no heed to the matter, it is merely putting off payment from day to day." [*S. P. D.* ii. 15.] At the same time confusion seized the internal administration of Jaipur. Ishwari Singh, never very remarkable for intelligence or spirit, now became half-witted. The able ministers who had so long maintained the power and prosperity of the State were gone one by one. Rajah Ayā Mal Khatri (called *Rājāmal* or *Malji* in the Rājasthāni and Marāthi records), the ablest of Jaipur diplomatists and the most faithful guardian of his master's interests, died on 9th February, 1747.*

* Ayā Mal was a master of Persian and edited a collection of

"Ishwari Singh and high and low alike in the city of Jaipur were grieved at his death. Nay, all Hindustan mourned for him," as a Maratha agent reported. [*S. P. D.*, ii. 1.] His son Keshav-das succeeded him as minister but, on a false charge of holding treasonable correspondence which was fabricated by his rival Hara-govind Nātāni, he was poisoned by command of his senseless master (*c.* August 1750.) The other elder statesman, Vidyādhar, was now a bed-ridden invalid. The old chief of artillery, Shivnāth Bhāyā, was thrown into prison with his entire family, wives and children. Ishwari Singh's only counsellors and confidants now were a barber and an elephant-driver! No wonder we find a Marātha observer reporting in November that the whole country of Jaipur had been convulsed. [*S. P. D.*, ii. 15.]

The Peshwā, in despair of getting his dues from Jaipur, had instructed his generals to visit that State after settling the affairs of Malwa. The tragic death of the last honest and friendly minister Keshavdas strengthened his resolve to apply force.

Aurangzib's letters entitled *Dastur-ul-aml-i-Āgahi*, his pen-name being *Āgahi*. On the death of Keshav-das, his soldiers greatly troubled his widow for the arrears of their pay; the Government merely procrastinated, and at last she cleared their dues by selling the robes and utensils of the family. Two sons of Keshav-das, named Harsāhi and Gursāhi were retained in service as *bakhshis*, while a son-in-law was consoled with a post in the cavalry. [*S.P.D.*, xxi. 34.]

The late minister's family seem to have appealed to the Marāthas to avenge his murder. Malhar Rāo Holkar started from Khāndesh on 29th September 1750 and marched towards Jaipur, while Jayāppā Sindhia, who had been at first bidden to accompany him, was detained in the Deccan for more than a month. On 19th November, Malhar Holkar and Gangādhar Tātyā (surnamed Chandra-chur) reached the Mukundarā pass and on the 28th Nenvé, which was taken after a siege of three days and made a Maratha outpost for holding the large pargana under it. After a halt of ten days here, the invaders marched to Jaipur, and when they were still two or three days' journey from that city Ishwari Singh's envoys met them with two *lakhs* of Rupees. Holkar flew into a rage at the smallness of the sum, would listen to no excuse, and ordered the march to be resumed. [*S. P. D.,* xxi 34, ii. 31, 19.]

The Jaipur *wakil* in alarm reported to his master that Malhar was coming to avenge the murder of Keshav-das. The old discarded ministers, Haragovind Nātāni and Vidyādhar, went to Ishwari Singh and advised him to assemble his troops and fight Holkar either in the open or from within the walled city. The Rajah disliked this counsel; he called his new favourites,

the barber and the elephant-driver, and ordered them to go to the Maratha camp, appease the wrath of Holkar by paying four or five lakhs, and turn him back from the way. They flatly refused to go, saying that they would be killed by Holkar in retaliation for Keshav-das's death, and that their master might slay them there if he wished but should not send them to face the Maratha's fury. The Rajah remained silent and brooded over his fate.

It was the 12th of December, 1750. Evening came and with it the news that Holkar had arrived within twenty miles of the city. Ishwari Singh ordered his servant to bring a live cobra and some arsenic as needed for preparing a medicine. It was done. At midnight he swallowed the poison and caused the cobra to sting him. Three of his queens and one favourite concubine took poison along with him and all five of them died in the silence and seclusion of that palace chamber. None in the city, not even the ministers of State, heard of the tragedy. Only one valet held the secret of it, while the corpses lay unburnt and unattended for eighteen hours. [*S. P. D.*, ii. 31; *Vam. Bh.* 3608-3611.]

Next day, three hours after dawn, Khande Rao Holkar and Gangādhar Tātyā with the Maratha vanguard appeared before Jaipur, while

Malhar with the rest of the army encamped at Phalāne-kund, six miles away. Hours passed away without any sign of activity, friendly or hostile, from the defenders of the capital. At last, at noon the minister went to the palace and sent word to the Maharajah, "The troops are coming out. Why are you still sleeping?" Then the valet disclosed that the Maharajah was no more.

A wild clamour of dismay and lamentation burst from all parts of the masterless city as the news of the tragedy flew around. The old ministers Haragovind and Vidyādhar somehow pacified the people and went out to the Marātha force at the gate, met its two leaders, and also sent news to Malhar, who came up with his troops close to the city in the afternoon. Malhar sent some men to the palace, who verified the news of the king's death. Maratha guards were immediately posted at the city gates and in the palace. The Rajah's corpse lay unburnt till after sunset, when Malhar sent two of his civil officers with a rich pall and the necessary expenses of the funeral from his own pocket, and consigned it to the flames in the palace garden. One more queen and twenty concubines* of Ishwari Singh burnt themselves alive.

* *S.P.D.*, ii. 31 (Baburao Vishnu's letter from Malhar's camp,

§ 7. *Madho Singh becomes king of Jaipur.*

Next day (14th December) a fast courier on a camel was sent to Madho Singh inviting him to come quickly and occupy the vacant throne. Haragovind and Vidyādhar visited Malhar and entreated him hard to spare the State. After four days' discussion they agreed to pay a heavy ransom for the kingdom and capital, and then Malhar recalled the pickets he had posted at various places and set himself to realise the money. Madho Singh arrived on 29th December and was welcomed by Malhar on the way and conducted to the palace, both seated on the same elephant.

Jayāppā Sindhia arrived on 6th January, 1751 and united forces with Malhar. "The question of ranson (*khandani*) had been settled before, but now a new demand was made that one-third or at least one-fourth of the territory of Jaipur should be made over to the Marathas by a written deed. This alienated the Rajah and the Rajputs." In the meantime vassals, especially a

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22 Jan.) But *Vamsha Bhāskar*, p. 3615, says that when that licentious youth, Khanderao Holkar, wanted to take to his harem the choicest concubines of Ishwari Singh, they burnt themselves to the number of eleven, on 14th Dec. *Vam. Bh.* 3612-3616.

large contingent of Shekhāwat warriors, had gathered round the new king and Madho Singh's policy changed: he would no longer remain a dependant of the Marāthas, but planned to free himself from their insatiable greed by means of murder. He invited the Maratha chiefs to a dinner, arranging to poison their food and kill their personal escorts by the same means. He pressed his request again and again. Malhar at first consented, but on Jayappa's flat refusal, he too declined. Then for some days Madho Singh set Brāhmans to cook sweetmeats for the Maratha soldiers, at the end of which he mixed poison with them. He even poisoned the drinking water, using two maunds of white arsenic for the purpose! "But God preserved our generals. Jayappa and Ummed Singh Hada hindered the crime. So, Madho Singh buried the noxious food in the ground." His next plan was to invite Tātyā Gangādhar and other Maratha agents to a conference and there murder them. He ordered his porters to let the *pālkis* of these four men come to his palace and then close the city gates to their followers. But it so happened that the Maratha chiefs could not all come to him together and made appointments for each at a different time, and so this plot too failed. [*S. P. D.* ii. 31, xxvii. 65.]

§ 8. *Massacre of Marathas in Jaipur city.*

The explosion of Rajput hatred, however, could not be altogether prevented; it burst on 10th January. The Marathas were taking advantage of the helpless condition of the Kachhwā State under a king propped up by their arms. They seemed to have looked upon Jaipur as a city taken by storm. It is not stated anywhere whether their rank and file imitated the licentious conduct of their chief Khande Rao and tried to abduct women from the houses of the citizens. But their domineering airs and garrison manners galled the proud Rajput spirit. On that day some four thousand Marathas had entered the city of Jaipur to see the temples and other sights of this newly built town, unique in India for the regularity and artistic beauty of its construction, and to buy horses, camels and saddlery for which Jaipur was famous. Among the visitors were many of Jayāppā's retainers, including four high captains entitled to ride in *pālkis*. Suddenly, at noon, a riot broke out and the citizens attacked the unsuspecting Marathas. For nine hours the slaughter and plunder raged from ward to ward of the city. Some fifteen hundred Marathas were slain and about a thousand wounded (many of them mortally), only some seventy of the visitors escaping with life and limb. Many, in leaping

down from the city walls, broke their legs or spine and only a few saved themselves in this way. Among the victims were several of Jayāppā's and Malhar's high officers and servants, a hundred Brāhmans, Pindhāris, slave girls, and even children. A thousand excellent horses ridden by these men as well as the golden bracelets, pearl necklaces, money and accoutrement that they had on their persons were taken away by the Rajputs.*

The shock of this blow spread to outside the capital. The Rajputs rose in the villages and killed the couriers of the Marathas wherever they could catch them, so that the roads were closed to them. Two days later (12th January) the Maratha army marched away from the gates of Jaipur to a place some eight miles off. Eight days passed in threats of war, after which (on 19th January) Madho Singh's *wakils* waited on the two generals and on his behalf disclaimed all previous

* Baburao Vishnu's letter of 22nd January. He ascribes the massacre to a deliberate plan of the Rajah, and says, "The four captains of Jayappa riding in *palkis* were taken for Tatya and other invited chiefs, and under that wrong notion Mādho Singh went away from his darbar to the roof of his palace. His men, acting as preconcerted, closed the city gates and began to massacre the Marathas within . . . 3000 Marathas were slain and 1000 wounded." [*S.P.D.* ii. 31.] *Vam. Bh.* 3622 gives the same figures. But another Maratha agent, Har Bāji Rām, writing from Jaipur on 7th Feb., puts the number of the dead as 1500, while Hari Vittal, writing on 12th Feb., gives the figure of five or six hundred men. [*S.P.D.*, xxvii. 64 and 65.]

knowledge or share in the riot, which they described as a sudden and spontaneous explosion. They pleaded for a compromise, saying that the dead were dead beyond recall. The Maratha leaders, too, felt that with their present forces they were powerless to avenge the massacre. Jaipur city was impregnable to assault, the country was large and peopled by a warlike race. So, they agreed to forgive the past on the following conditions : (1) the restoration of all the horses captured in the city, (2) payment of compensation for the property plundered, and (3) delivery of orders on bankers for the ransom previously agreed upon.* Even then strained feelings and mutual suspicion continued and the Rajah and Malhar refused to see each other. The Maratha generals were being constantly pressed by Safdar Jang's agent Rajah Ram Narayan present in their camp to hasten to his aid in the Bangash campaign, for which he agreed to pay 50 *lakhs* of Rupees as soon as the Afghan was defeated. But Mādho Singh put off payment from day to day with smooth promises, and thus more than three weeks were wasted before the Marathas could

* From the collection made in Jaipur, Malhar and Jayāppā were ordered by their Rajah, on 18 June 1751, to pay him annually half a *lakh* as the *nazar* of Mādho Singh's kingdom. [Vad, iii. p. 129.]

leave Jaipur territory. Meantime a terrible scarcity raged in their camp; rice sold at four seers, oil at 2 seers, *ghee* at 1½ seers, millet flour at 8 seers, and horse gram at 16 seers for a Rupee. No provision came to them by the regular way of trade; only their foraging parties brought in a little grain by raiding the villages. On 7th February, Malhar was encamped 24 miles east of Jaipur, and a few days afterwards he resumed his march to Agra by regular stages in order to join Safdar Jang. [*S. P. D.*, xxvii. 64 and 65.]

§ 9. *Salābat Khan fights Suraj Mal, January 1750.*

The civil war in Jaipur having been ended by the accession of Mādho Singh, we are free to turn to the affairs of Mārwār. Its ruler Abhay Singh died on 21st June 1749; his son Rām Singh ascended his throne, and then the long-dreaded war of succession between Ram Singh and his paternal uncle Bakht Singh (the chieftain of Nāgor) could be averted no longer. It was actually precipitated by the youthful new Maharajah's insane pride, reckless insolence, and haughty challenge to Bakht Singh. The latter had recently risen high in influence at the imperial Court, having been nominated *subahdār* of Gujrat

(29 June 1748) in the vain hope of stemming the tide of Maratha aggression there. It was therefore the interest of the Emperor to placate him, and so the Mir Bakhshi Salābat Khan was authorised to give him armed support in wresting the throne of Mārwār, on condition of Bakht Singh helping the imperialists to defend the *subahs* of Agra and Ajmir (both under the Mir Bakhshi) from Maratha invaders and local rebels and enforce the royal administration there. After making this arrangement at Delhi, Bakht Singh went to his own principality in order to raise troops, while Salābat Khan, taking 18,000 men with him, started for Ajmir, where the two were to unite.

On the way, the Bakhshi halted at Pataudi (35 miles south-west of Delhi) for the first ten days of the month of fasting (30 Nov.—9 Dec. 1749) and then marched ravaging Mewāt to the little mud-fort of Nimrānā (33 miles s.w. of Pataudi), which belonged to the Jat Rajah. His vanguard took it at the first attack (30th December.) Early next morning his camp and baggage were sent ahead towards Nārnol (17 miles west of Nimrānā), which was the seat of a *faujdār* attached to the subah of Ajmir. When, a few hours later, Salābat himself mounted to follow, he suddenly changed his plan and, wishing to go to

the Agra province and fight the Jats there first, called a council of his officers. They advised him to go to Ajmir first, there strengthen himself by junction with Bakht Singh who was on the way with his levies, train his raw troops for some time, settle the affairs of Ajmir, and then challenge the Jats with a better prospect of success. But the easy capture of Nimrānā had turned Salābat's head; he would not listen to reason; he recalled his baggage and set his face back towards Agra. The night was spent in Sarāi Sobhāchānd.* In the course of that night an extremely mobile Jat force of 5,000 men under Suraj Mal overtook him by a forced march. Next day (1st January 1750), the Mughal foraging party found the Jats barring their way and summoned reinforcements which reached them two hours before sunset. The soldiers of the Bakhshi's army, hungry thirsty and inexperienced in war, began to run, one before another, placing their guns in front lest the Jats should capture them at night if planted in the rear. Seeing this disorder, the Jats charged in successive squadrons, firing volleys from their muskets, and causing heavy slaughter. Hakim Khan Kheshgi, the commander of the Bakhshi's right wing, was shot dead; Ali Rustam Khan, in charge of his

* *Indian Atlas,* Sh. 49 s.w., has *Sobapur,* 5 miles due east of Narnol and 13m. n.w. of Nimrana.

vanguard, was wounded. Utter defeat fell on the imperialists. The victorious Jat horse hovered round the camp of Salābat Khan, plundered a part of it, and threw him into helpless terror. The Jat Rajah Badan Singh had at first humbly begged the Bakhshi not to ravage his lands, as he had done no offence against the Emperor but was living as a loyal vassal, and the Bakhshi had haughtily demanded two *krores* of Rupees as the price of his forbearance, saying that Mewāt was his (the Bakhshi's) *jāgir* and the Jat Rajah had seized some villages there and slain Asad Khan Khānazād his local agent. Now, after a day or two of helpless confinement within his entrenchments, Salābat was forced to sue for peace, which was granted by the Jats on the following terms :—(i) the imperial Government would promise not to cut down *pipal* trees, (ii) nor to hinder the worship of it, while (iii) Suraj Mal undertook to collect 15 *lakhs* of Rupees from the Rājputs as the revenue of the province of Ajmir and pay it into the imperial Exchequer, provided that the Bakhshi took his advice and did not proceed beyond Nārnol.*

* *Siyar,* iii. 38-39; *Muz.* 28-32; *Sujān Charitra,* iii *Jang. S.P.D.,* xxi. 26 adds that the Rana of Gohad joined Suraj Mal in the attack upon the Bakhshi, from whom Suraj Mal captured 2 or 3 elephants and the Rana one; and that finally the Jat Rajah agreed to pay

§ 10. *Salabat Khan's Rajput campaign.*

The Bakhshi then turned back to his original course and reached Nārnol, where Bakht Singh joined him. Then the two by a forced march arrived at the Gokla hill near Ajmir. At the first report of the Bakhshi's coming, Rām Singh of Jodhpur had appealed for help to Ishwari Singh of Jaipur. The latter Rajah gladly welcomed this opportunity of being publicly regarded as the superior of every other potentate in Rajasthan and the patron of his former rival, the house of Jodhpur. He met Rām Singh at Jodhpur and decided on war, saying "God is the Giver of victory." Their united forces, 30,000 strong with abundance of artillery, marched from Jodhpur towards Merta, the eastern frontier-fort of Mārwār, and arrived at Pipār in the morning of 4th April, 1750.

Meantime, Salābat Khan, after resting for some time at Ajmir, had advanced with Bakht Singh by way of Pushkar and Riān of Sher Singh (15 miles south-east of Merta and two miles north of the Sarsuti river) to Merta. From Merta he turned sharply to the south, *via* Luniāwās (11 m. s. s. w. of Merta), and arriving at noon about 5

nine lakhs as war-contribution and to send Suraj Mal with 5,000 horse (and a contingent of 200 troopers from Gohad) to serve under the Bakhshi.

miles on the right hand of Ishwari Singh's position, halted, (evidently at the village of Raonā, 7 miles east of Pipār, on the road to Merta.) Bakht Singh had tempted Salābat to come so far with the assurance that when he arrived sufficiently near many of Ram Singh's discontented chiefs would at once come over to Bakht Singh's side and the Jodhpur Rajah would be compelled by his helpless situation to pay tribute.

On hearing of the approach of the Mughals, Ishwari Singh advanced towards the enemy in line of battle. Salābat, on his part, prepared for fight and, placing his camp and baggage in the rear, presented a bold front to the two Rajahs. But his own army was a house divided against itself. He could not trust Bakht Singh fully and remarked, "These Rangars (wild Rajputs) are all of the same breed. I cannot be sure what Bakht Singh may do at any time.* Therefore, I must keep him seated on my own elephant." Bakht Singh's retainers opposed this proposal, which would have left them leaderless and helpless in case he was made prisoner. This internal quarrel

* Bakht Singh's pride in Rathor prestige had once before proved stronger than his self-interest and fidelity to his plighted word. Having invited Sawāi Jai Singh to invade Jodhpur territory, he had, at the ensuing battle of Gangwana (1741), fought most desperately against the invader.

prevented any battle being fought that day (4th April), and the armies merely stood facing each other. But this marching and counter-marching and standing in battle array completely exhausted Salābat Khan's troops; no chief of Rām Singh came over to his side; the noonday sun blazed overhead with not a tree in sight; the water in his camp ran short, and the soldiers began to rob the *bhistis* who were bringing water in their leather-bags. Salābat Khan, therefore, wrote an autograph letter to Ishwari Singh, "I do not at all desire war. There is only this affair between Bakht Singh and Ram Singh, which you had better settle as arbitrator. In my opinion it would be expedient if you do not allow your vanguard to advance any further. I am encamping [where I am now]; do you encamp at your place. We two have between us 30 to 35 thousand soldiers and large trains of artillery. Where is the gain in our quarrelling about this one man Bakht Singh?" Salābat, thus assumed a tone of lordly superiority and benevolence, made an oblique march to the right hand, and encamped at a distance of four miles from the Jaipur-Jodhpur armies.

Ishwari Singh, on his part, saw that by merely taking Rām Singh under his protection he had already gained from him a large sum for his

army expenses, and appeared before the Rajputana public as the more powerful of the two Maharajahs. The Bakhshi considered that he had already created a general impression of his power and greatness, and that if he now forced a war on, the Rāthor clan would be turned into bitter enemies of the empire. Rām Singh found that many of his vassals, being of uncertain loyalty, were keeping aloof in their castles, so that the whole brunt of the campaign would fall on his unaided shoulders. All three parties being thus disposed, Salābat's proposal of a compromise was everywhere welcomed. Rām Singh encamped in front of the Bakhshi, at two or three miles' distance, while the terms were being discussed.

In two days, the scanty water in the Bakhshi's position became totally exhausted, but the two Maharajahs barred his way to the only place where a better supply of water could be had. Salābat in helplessness threw the blame for his untenable situation on Bakht Singh, telling him; "For thy sake, I have been put to this disgrace. Thou hast performed none of thy promises." And then he ranged his artillery round his own tents as a precaution against his ally! On the 6th of April, the Rajah of Bikānir (the steadfast ally of Bakht) reached the Mughal camp with 2,000 men and pacified the Bakhshi. Ishwari Singh, too, sent

a conciliatory message, entreating Salābat Khan as a great man to cherish the humble and not to be impatient. So, the Bakhshi halted, intending to take whatever was paid in cash and a written bond for the balance, and to make Rām Singh give some money to Bakht Singh and finally reduce the imposed tribute at the entreaty of Rām Singh, so as to keep both these Rāthor princes under obligation to him! [*S. P. D.*, ii. 16.]

But the higgling continued and no mutual agreement was arrived at in ten days, after which the Bakhshi decided to try force. Insolently rejecting Bakht Singh's advice, Salābat Khan sent his vanguard on to make a direct attack on Rām Singh's front lines, where all his big artillery was planted. When the Mughals arrived close enough, the Rajputs who had been hitherto perfectly quiet, delivered a sudden volley, killing many of them. The imperialists halted and began an exchange of gun-fire (14th April, 1750.) After four hours' waste of munition in this kind of indecisive battle, nature asserted her supremacy over man; the summer sun of the Rajput desert proved intolerable; the Mughal soldiers turned frantic with thirst, as the only wells in that region were in their enemy's possession. "Many of these troopers at noon, in search of water, went up to the Rajput position; the Rajputs very chivalrously

gave water to them and their horses till they were sated and then told them,—'Go back now. There is war between you and us.' " [*Siyar,* iii. 39.]

The battle ceased of itself. Each party fell back on its camp, the imperialists setting the example. On the two sides taken together some 70 or 80 men only were killed. At first there was loud talk in the camps of pressing the contest to a decision the next day by a charge straight ahead and sword to sword combat. But the Delhi troops were not prepared to face the Mārwār sun again, and next day they did not stir out of their camp at all, merely posting patrols round it.

Ishwari Singh showed a similar spirit. The night following the battle he held a public consultation with his own followers and those of the Mārwār Rajah. He began with thunder, crying out, "For Rājputs to fight with artillery is to deserve curses and the shame of cowardice. Do you, therefore, gird your loins and make a frontal charge on horseback. God is the Giver of victory." They replied, "We are your servants, ever at your command. You merely stand behind and see how we fight to-morrow." But, as the Marātha agent in his camp had shrewdly guessed from the first, all this bluster was a pretence of the Jaipur Rajah for saving his face. After this fire-eating resolution at the public *darbār,* Ishwari

Singh held a secret council with half a dozen of his own leading advisers and those of Rām Singh. In reply to his question, they told him that it was wiser to pay money and make peace than to fight. They had divined their master's pacific intentions and knew that he had already opened negotiations with the Mir Bakhshi through Hari Hakim.

§ 11. *Salabat makes peace with Rajputs.*

On the 16th, the terms were settled, as both sides were at heart bent on peace. As the Maratha agent in the Jaipur camp noticed, "In fact, Ishwari Singh recognises that on the one side there is the Mir Bakhshi, a great man, and on the other side Rām Singh, a newly crowned Rajah. If there is a severe reverse to either party, it would be a cause of disgrace. Therefore, he has resolved to bring about a reconciliation between them somehow or other and thus become famous himself. He has now 25,000 horsemen, 400 light pieces (*rahkala*) and other kinds of artillery, besides excellent war material. On the side of Bakht Singh are the Mir Bakhshi, the Bikānir Rajah, the Rupnagar chief's younger brother, and many other Rājputs, totalling 20 to 25 thousand troops and good artillery. Neither side desires war. We expect a contribution more or less to

be agreed upon as payable to the Bakhshi and then peace will be made and all will retire to their respective places." [*S. P. D.*, xxi. 27, 35.]

Ishwari Singh paid a visit to Salābat and was presented by Bakht Singh. He promised a tribute of 27 *lakhs* on condition of the imperial army withdrawing from Rajputana and the Bakhshi transferring the actual government (*nāib-nāzimi*) of Agra to him. Ram Singh paid three *lakhs* in cash and promised four *lakhs* more by instalments. Bakht Singh gained absolutely nothing; his objections and claims alike were disregarded in the eagerness to make peace, and he left the Bakhshi's army and went back to Nāgor in anger. The Jat contingent returned to its home and Ishwari Singh to his capital, while Ram Singh took post on his frontier at Merta. On the return march, the Bakhshi parted from Ishwari Singh at Sambhar and proceeded to Ajmir, where he encamped outside the city for five months, trying to collect the promised contributions from the Rajput States, but met with nothing but evasion and delay.

During Salābat Khan's halt in Ajmir a serious situation had developed in the Gangetic doab, where the Afghans killed the wazir's agent Naval Rai (2 August) and utterly routed the wazir himself (13 September.) Rumour spread the news of the wazir's death and the expected collapse

of the Delhi Government through want of a supreme administrative chief. At the beginning of September the Emperor wrote to Salābat to hasten back with his troops at the sight of the letter and reinforce the wazir in face of the Afghans; and when three weeks later news came of the disaster to Safdar Jang, the Bakhshi was eager to go to Delhi and attempt to secure the vacant wazirship. But he was compelled to linger in Ajmir by his utter lack of money and a dying hope of realising some portion of the promised subsidy from the Rajputs. The Jaipur Rajah repeatedly invited the Bakhshi to visit his beautiful new capital, but the latter declined as he was in a hurry to return to Court. Ishwari Singh sent a parting gift of one *lakh* of Rupees to Salābat Khan, who was glad to receive what money he could get and to accept bonds for the balance. [*S. P. D.*, xxi. 34.] Towards the end of October he set out for Delhi, giving the Nārnol district to the Jaipur Rajah, who sent his diwān Hara-govind Nātāni, with 2000 horse to control it. But all Mewāt was up as soon as the imperial army vacated it. "Mewātis and Jats are causing disturbances. The administration has broken down." [*Ibid.*]

This expedition, in which Salābat Khan kept 17 or 18 thousand men engaged for a full year

(Nov. 1750—Oct. 1751) and gained neither victory nor money, uttely ruined his finances. This was the last attempt of the imperial Government to impose its authority on Rajputana. Thereafter it made no further effort to realise its dues and rights, but left that vast country to its rulers and the Marathas. Rantambhor was taken by the Rajah of Jaipur in 1754 and Ajmir by the ruler of Jodhpur in 1752, and then the last vestige of imperial suzerainty disappeared from Rajputana as complctely as it did from Bengal Bihar and Orissa after 1765.

§ 12. *Bakht Singh gains the throne of Jodhpur.*

Bakht Singh, though scornfully cast aside by his ally the Mir Bakhshi, got his chance a few months later, when Khush-hal Singh Champawat, the premier noble of Mārwār, was insulted by Ram Singh and came to Bakht Singh in search of revenge. Their combined army met Ram Singh near Luniāwās, 11 miles s.s.w. of Merta, on 27th November 1750, when 1,500 to 2,000 men fell on the field, the most notable of them being Sher Singh Mertia and one or two other leaders on the side of the Jodhpur Rajah. The havoc was specially severe among Bakht Singh's allies from Bikānir, who lost 6 or 7 captains. Bakht himself was wounded by spear and bullet and at the first

onset had to fall back four miles; but in the end Ram Singh lost the day and fled away to his capital. Unable to hold it, he took refuge in Jaipur, while Jodhpur opened its gates (8th July 1751) to Bakht Singh, who crowned himself there. Bakht Singh also took possession of the city of Ajmir and raised a large army to keep the Marathas out of his realm. But when encamped at Sindholiyā he died of cholera (*c.* 23 Sep. 1752), though the popular belief in Rajputana was that he had been done to death by his niece, the Rāthor queen of Mādho Singh, by means of a poisoned robe,—the familiar device of popular legend.* His son Bijay Singh succeeded to a realm that was greatly divided and weakened by Maratha rapacity, and harried by Ram Singh for years

* Battle near Luniāwās: *Vam. Bh.* 3626-3630 (500 slain and 800 wounded on the two sides together.) *S.P.D.*, ii. 15, gives the first incorrect rumour of the result, but correct date. Diyālji Chāran's *Kiyant* places the battle at Dudāsar tank, near Merta, and on 11 Nov. 1750, and adds, "In conjunction with Gaj. S. of Bikanir, Bakht took Jodhpur, which was given over to plunder for four *prahars*, on 21 June 1751." But *Vir. Vin.* gives 8 July as the date of this capture.

Death of Bakht S: *Vam. Bh.* 3634 (silent as to cause.) Shākir 65 ascribes it to cholera. *TAh.* 43*b* says that he was seized with vomiting on 21 Sep. 1752 and died after a few days. *Vir Vinod* gives 21 Sep. as the date and records the tradition that he was poisoned by Mādho S. Diyalji's *Kiyant* gives the date as 26 Aug., but is silent about the cause of his death. [*Bikanir Gaz.* 1874, p. 54.]

afterwards. Unable to recover his father's throne even with Maratha help, Ram Singh was at last glad to accept the Sambhar district for his maintenance and died a refugee at Jaipur in 1773.

§ 13. *Ummed Singh's struggles for Bundi.*

We shall now turn to the ever fluctuating tides of the contest for Bundi between Dalil Singh (supported by his father-in-law the Rajah of Jaipur, on whom fell the entire brunt of the contest) and Budh Singh and his heir Ummed Singh who secured Marātha allies besides being joined (after 1743) by Ishwari Singh's rival Mādho Singh (whose cause was championed by his maternal uncle, the Mahārānā of Udaipur.) Budh Singh had been deprived of his capital and throne in 1729. The Marāthas had conquered Bundi back for Budh Singh in April 1734, but immediately after their departure, Jai Singh had wrested it from Budh Singh's agent and restored it to his *protege*. When Jai Singh died (21 Sep. 1743), the dispossessed heir of Bundi, then in his 15th year, rose to recover his patrimony. Durjan Sāl, the Maharao of Kotā (*r.* 1723-1757), very generously befriended the fugitive Ummed.

On 10th July 1744, a Hādā army well provided with artillery, laid siege to Bundi, which was held by a *qiladār* from Jaipur. Fakhrud-

daulah, the newly appointed *subahdār* of Gujrat, was then making a pilgrimage at Ajmir on his way to his viceroyalty. He was hired by Durjan Sal's *senāpati* Govindrām Nāgar for a *lakh* of Rupees to lend the support of his own troops in the attack on Bundi. Bundi was stormed by the besiegers on 28th July. The defeated Dalil Singh fell back on Tārāgarh, but continued to offer a stubborn resistance from that fort. Ishwari Singh had hurriedly sent an army to his support. But though Govindrām was killed, Fakhr-ud-daulah routed, and Ummed himself wounded, the campaign went against the Jaipur party; Dalil Singh had to remove with his family to Nenvé and Ummed occupied all the Bundi territory. [*Vam. Bh.* 3354-3361.]

Ishwari Singh was soon afterwards summoned to Delhi by the Emperor and had to put off the recovery of Bundi. For the projected campaign he sent his agent (Rajah Ayā Mal Khatri) and secured Marātha aid. Ummed Singh also beat about for allies; he went to Ajmir and there met Abhay Singh. He found another friend in Mahārānā Jagat Singh, whose aim was to secure the Jaipur throne for his nephew Mādho Singh, for which object he promised 20 *lakhs* of Rupees to Malhar Rao Holkar. The Mewār envoy exchanged turbans with Jayāppā Sindhia and made

a treaty for concerted action with him. But Ishwari Singh's clever agent Ayā Mal, dissolved this alliance, evidently by bidding higher, and secured for his master the aid of all the Maratha generals except Malhar.

Ayā Mal, with a large force of Marātha allies, returned to Jaipur. On the way, he bombarded Kotā and plundered much of its territory for being his enemy's chief supporter (end of January, 1745.) Meantime, the Mewār army had marched into Jaipur territory and halted at Todā, waiting for Holkar. Here Ayā Mal's Marātha associates surprised the Mahārānā's camp at midnight, fired into it, and put the Mewār troops to flight at the return of daylight. The Mahārānā could escape only by promising to pay 22 *lakhs*. The victorious Ishwari Singh marched on Bundi, which was surrendered by its Kotā *qiladār*. A large Marātha army, guided by a Jaipur baron, then attacked Kotā and bombarded it for two months, during which Jayāppā received a bullet wound in his arm. At last Durjan Sāl saved his capital by ceding the fort and district of Kāprāni to the Marathas, to be divided into three shares and held for Holkar Sindhia and the Peshwā (early April 1745.) [*Vam. Bh.* 3374-3384.]

The Marātha generals having left the ring clear, Ummed Singh with a gift of 16 *lakhs* from

Durjan Sāl raised a fresh army and again advanced upon Bundi, defended by Nandrām Khatri, a Jaipur officer. On 20th July 1745, Nandrām opposed him at Bichodi, but after a severe contest was forced to retire, when Ummed gained Bundi. But the victor held the city for 16 days only, because on 6th August, a superior Jaipur army defeated him at Devpur and the Jaipur general re-entered Bundi. Ummed wandered for some time after as a homeless refugee. His patron Durjan Sāl met the Mahārānā and Mādho Singh at Nāthdwārā on 4th October 1746; the three confederates sent *wakils* to hire a Marātha army against Jaipur; but the attempt of the allies failed at Rājmahal (1 March 1747), where Ummed shared the defeat of his friends. The second half of that year saw a drawn battle between Jaipur and the Hādās, after which Ishwari Singh went to Bundi (17th August) and passed some months there. Towards the end of the year he had to leave for Delhi at the Emperor's call to meet the Abdāli invasion* and did not return to his State before the end of March 1748.

§ 14. *Ummed Singh as Rajah of Bundi.*

In the battle of Bagru (1-7 August 1748), Ummed Singh was present on the side of Mādho

* *Vam. Bh.*, 3384-3414, 3455-3475.

Singh and shared the fruits of his patron's victory. From Bagru the victors went to Pushkar, where Malhar and Abhay Singh exchanged turbans in sign of brotherhood and cemented their friendship by many a deep carousal together. Thence they went to Bundi which was given up by its Jaipur *qiladār* on 18th October 1748, and Ummed was formally enthroned five days later. [*Vam. Bh.*, 3534-42.]

The long struggle being over at last, the lord of Bundi set himself to settling its long disturbed administration and restoring its economic prosperity. But the outlook before him was most dismal. "Ummed [had] regained his patrimony after 14 years of exile. . . . But this contest deprived it of many of its ornaments, and, combined with other causes, at length reduced it to its intrinsic worth,—'a heap of cotton'. . . . Malhar Holkar had the title of *māmu* or [maternal] uncle to young Ummed. But . . . he did not take his buckler to protect the oppressed at the impulse of chivalrous notions. . . He demanded and obtained by regular deed of surrender the town and district of Patan on the left bank of the Chambal . . . Ummed felt his spirit cramped and his energies contracted by the dominant influence and avarice of the insatiable Marathas through whose means he [had]

recovered his capital." [Tod, ii. Haravati, ch. 4.]

So in August 1749, Ummed Singh set out for the Deccan, evidently to plead his cause in person at the Maratha Court and attempt to get some relief from their harsh exactions. At Bāfgāon in Khāndesh, the old home of the Holkars, he was welcomed (second half of October) by Khande Rao in the absence of his father Malhar, then at Punā. Malhar returned shortly after and celebrated his daughter's marriage, at which Ummed as a "nephew" by adoption made costly presents. Then on hearing of Rājah Shāhu's death (15 Dec.), both Malhar and Ummed hastened to Satara, where the Rajput prince witnessed the coronation of the new king Rāmrājah and the contest and subsequent reconciliation between the Peshwā and Raghuji Bhonslé. He finally returned to his own capital on 12th July, 1750. Five months later, when Malhar was at the gate of Jaipur, Ummed Singh joined him there and acted as a mediator between him and the Kachhwās. [*Vam. Bh.*, 3587-'88, 3603, 3613-'22.]

Ummed Singh had promised the Marathas ten *lakhs* of Rupees as the price of their support. Out of this, two *lakhs* were paid in 1749, another instalment of three *lakhs* was assigned by the Maratha Rajah on 18 June 1751 to Malhar and

Jayappa in equal parts on realisation, while the balance of five *lakhs* was ordered to be paid into the Satara treasury. [Vad, iii. p. 143.] In addition, the *chauth* of Bundi, Nenvé, and other places was farmed to Malhar and Jayappa from June 1751 onwards, for a fixed sum of Rs. 75,000 payable annually to the Rajah of Satara. [*Ibid.*, p. 129.]

CHAPTER VIII.

AHMAD SHAH'S REIGN; EVENTS UP TO 1752.

§ 1. *Emperor Ahmad Shah; his character.*

Ahmad Shah, the only son of Muhammad Shah, did no doubt come to the throne of Delhi at the age of 22 (solar) years; but his education had been totally neglected. His suspicious and miserly father had kept him confined in one corner of the Delhi palace and stinted him shamefully. Young Ahmad did not receive any training in war or government; he had never been placed in charge of a contingent of his own as royal heirs before him used to be; he had not even been given a sufficient allowance to live in ordinary comfort nor permitted to enjoy the usual games and amusements of princes, such as polo, animal combats and hunting. The result was that his natural dulness of intellect was not cured by education, and he grew to manhood as a good-natured imbecile, without a personality of his own and entirely dominated by others. Not only had he been denied any schooling in his early life, but he had received the worst possible training for a ruler of men. "From his infancy to the age of 21 (the time of his accession), he had been brought up

among the women of the harem, in neglect and poverty and often subjected to his father's brow-beating." Totally ignorant of administration and war alike, when he succeeded to the throne unbridled power had its natural effect on such a raw youth. He was immediately surrounded by base instruments of pleasure, who placed every temptation before him, to which he only too readily yielded, neglecting his duty to his realm and to society. Thus responsibility could not call forth any capacity latent in him, but only revealed to the public his defects of character in the ugliest light. He practically resigned his royal function to Jāvid Khan, and openly referred all questions and suitors to that eunuch for decision, while he himself plunged into sensual pleasure without check or distraction. Jāvid Khan, on his part, encouraged the unhappy youth to drink wine and filled his harem with women. With these debased women came equally debased men whose only business was to humour his passions and fancies. "Gradually the Emperor's mind inclined to the society of vulgar persons (only), and he practised evil deeds which made him a shame to the country."

The decline went on with increasing speed till at the end of the second year of his reign we find that "the administration had grown very

weak and degraded; the pillars of the State were daily shaken; the Emperor never inquired about the realm, the soldiery, or the treasury,—the three foundations of an empire. . . . . Jāvid Khan, who had usurped the entire control of the State, governed according to his (poor) natural capacity, assuring the Emperor that everything was being done according to the regulations; so that the Emperor withdrew his hand even from what (little) he formerly used to look after. He became so absorbed in pleasure that a whole *kos* (an area of four square miles) was turned into a women's preserve by excluding all males from it, and there the Emperor used to disport himself in female company for a week or a month in bower and park." [*TAh.*, 13*b*-14*a*, 21*a*, 25*a*; *Siyar*, iii. 27.]

In the midst of the ennui caused by sensual excess, he used to seek diversion in childish acts of severeignty. For instance, we read that one day in February 1753, he took his infant son Mahmud Shah with himself to a bed of narcissus flowers in bloom in the plain below the window of morning salute, and summoning all the little sons of the nobles and other courtiers who had the *entree* made them present *nazars* to the prince and follow in his train! Then he took the child with himself to the balconies of the Queen-mother and

Malika-i-Zamani and made him formally *salām* them from outside, as the Emperors used to do. Next, he seated the infant on a royal cushion in a diminutive tent newly made for him, sent the nobles' sons to stand round him, and himself went to visit this juvenile Court. The royal infant's eunuchs welcomed the Emperor on the way and offered him presents in the name of their master! After this, we need not wonder that in November 1753 he thought fit to appoint this son (a boy in his third year) as governor of the Panjab, and in perfect keeping with this spirit nominated a baby one year old as the deputy under him, and that the prince toddled up to the *Diwān-i-khās* and made his bow of thanksoffering in full Court, while baby-clothes made of cloth of gold were sent to his juvenile deputy at Lāhor; or that the equally important charge of Kashmir, then threatened with invasion by Abdali's general Jahān Ḵhan, was conferred on a still smaller prince Tāla' Sa'id Shah (one year old) as absentee *subahdār,* with a lad of fifteen (another Court favourite) as the *nāib nāzim.* Even his Court annalist is constrained to say that these acts only showed the Emperor's lack of sense. [*TAh.* 46*b*, 85*b*, 86*a*.]

Occasionally a flash of anger would lend life and colour to his speech, as during the rebellion of Safdar Jang, but it ended only in words.

Ahmad totally lacked the martial spirit, the capacity to lead armies, and even personal courage. He could not be persuaded to come out of the safety and seclusion of his palace-fort and show himself at the head of his troops, even when his very life and throne demanded that he should thus hearten his supporters and confound the rebels. The imperial army clamoured under his window inviting him to lead them forth in a campaign for wresting the provinces from usurpers, so that revenue might again come to the Delhi Exchequer and the starving soldiery and servants of the royal household might get their long arrears of salary. But he would not agree to it. [*TAh.* 66*b*, 117*a*.] His panic flight from Sikandrabad abandoning all the women of his family to captivity and possible dishonour, at a mere demonstration by the Marāthas, has branded his name with infamy in Indian history for all time.

In the last two or three years of his reign, he devoted himself to personally transacting business of State for full six hours every morning, without a respite for eating or drinking. He read the news-reports received from all four quarters, wrote replies on the despatches of the *subahdārs,* heard petitions of complaint, inspected the muster-rolls of the troops, and wrote full orders on the revenue or administrative cases, clearly summaris-

ing the contents of these papers and the details of his decision. But his energy bore no fruit from his lack of practical knowledge, driving power and persistency of effort. The self-willed youth of 25 would listen to nobody's counsel, but gave his orders with the unreasoning obstinacy of an autocrat, and these were never translated into action. The actual administration did not show the least improvement for all this activity in the closet. The fixed period of business being over, he withdrew himself from the sight of men for the next 18 hours; the women in his harem and secluded parks monopolised him, and he would refuse a hearing even to his highest minister during this daily eclipse of monarchy, saying with irritation, "I personally devote myself to the administration every day up to noon, besides holding *darbār* on fixed occasions. I am now engaged in refreshing my spirits and you have come to trouble me. No noble should visit me except during the prescribed six hours in the forenoon and the *darbār* days, unless I summon him for some special purpose."*

* *TAh.* 101 *b*, 115 *a*. I cannot understand this author's remark that "though the Emperor on account of his youth had a pleasure-loving temperament, he possessed perfect intelligence and readiness of reply" or that "no man was more learned than the Emperor" (illustrated by the case of his writing in his own hand a letter in Turki.) *TAh.* 103*a*, 104*b*. If he really possessed such brain power it was completely neutralised by his utter incapacity for action and for judging character and choosing proper agents.

§ 2. *Queen-mother Udham Bai.*

The Queen-mother Udham Bai, formerly a public dancing girl, had been introduced to Muhammad Shah's notice by Khadija Khanam, the daughter of Amir Khan, and had so fascinated that Emperor as to be raised to the dignity of a queen. Neither her humble birth and ignoble profession nor her later life in the royal harem had fitted her to play worthily the part of the veiled power behind the throne, in which so many queens of Muslim India have distinguished themselves. She remained the same vulgar woman of loose character to the end, using her son's elevation as a lever for asserting her own greatness at Court and for grasping at money. She had fallen under royal disfavour and even persecution for her conduct during the latter days of her wedded life, and she now took her revenge by heaping scorn, humiliation and poverty upon her former rivals, the nobly born widows of Muhammad Shah,—Malika-i-Zamani and Sahiba Mahal, who were universally honoured in Delhi society. There were two redeeming traits in her character, namely her blind animal affection for her son and her extensive unselfish charity, by which the nephews and grandsons of former Emperors, pining in neglect and abject poverty in the Delhi palace, as well as

many poor people living outside were enabled to enjoy comfort and decency. [*TAh.* 16.]

She had not the sense to choose capable instruments and govern through them, but thought of rivalling Nur Jahan by transacting State business in person. "Daily the high officers used to go and sit down at her porch (*deorhi*) and she used to hold discussions with them from behind a screen (through the medium of eunuchs); all petitions (*mutālib*) of the realm and closed envelopes that were sent into the harem were read out to her and she passed orders on them, which were final." The result can be inferred from the Court historian's pious lament, "O God! that the affairs of Hindustan should be conducted by a woman so foolish as this!" [*TAh.* 45*b*.] But what outraged public sentiment and lowered the imperial prestige most was her intimacy with the eunuch Jāvid Khān, who even went so far as to pass his nights in the imperial harem, in defiance of the long-standing palace rules. The scandal became so notorious that the royal guards who were starving from their salaries remaining unpaid for more than a year and could get no relief from the Emperor or the Emperor's controllers, at last staged a scene. They tied up a young ass and a bitch at the palace gate and when the nobles and other courtiers came to attend the darbār, they audaciously urged

them, saying, "First make your bow to these. This one (pointing to the ass) is the Nawab Bahadur, and that (the bitch) is Hazrat Qudsia, the Queen-mother." !*

At a time when the soldiers were daily mutinying for their long overdue pay and the Government could not raise even two *lakhs* by selling the palace plate, Udham Bai committed the criminal folly of spending two *krores* in celebrating her birthday, 21st January 1754. [*TAh.* 108.]

After her son's accession, Udham Bāi was successively given the titles of *Bāi-jiu Sāhiba, Nawāb Qudsia, Sāhiba-uz-zamāni, Sāhibjiu Sāhiba, Hazrat,* and *Qibla-i-Alam.* A *mansab* of 50,000 horse (nominal rank) was conferred upon her, and her birthday used to be celebrated with greater pomp and lavishness of expenditure than that of the Emperor himself. Her brother, Mān Khañ, hitherto a vagabond haunting the lanes and occasionally following the despicable profession of a male dancer behind singing girls, was created a 6-*hazāri* peer with the title of Mutaqad-ud-daulah Bahādur. [*TAh.* 16*a*, 17*a*; *Ch. Gul.* 400*a*.]

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* Shākir, 34-35. Well might this generous and loyal hereditary servant of the Crown cry out in the agony of his heart after narrating this incident, "Great God! the people have utterly lost all fear of their sovereign and regard for decency."

§ 3. *Javid Khan, eunuch, all-powerful.*

Jāvid Khan had been assistant controller of the harem servants and manager of the Begams' estates during the late reign. He had established complete sway over the mind and body of Udham Bāi even before her husband's death. And now at the accession of her son, Jāvid's advance was rapid and boundless. He was at once created a 6-*hazāri*, and to save appearances the same high rank was conferred upon his chief, Roz-āfzun Khān, the *nāzir* or superintendent of the harem, a survivor of the age of Aurangzib, who was now well-stricken in years and unable to use his feet for weakness and rheumatism. But all real power passed into Jāvid's hands, who was appointed (on 19th June 1748) superintendent of the Privy Council (*Diwān-i-khās*), above the heads of the hereditary peers. By virtue of this office, audience with the Emperor rested entirely in his hands, and he could perpetuate his sway over his master by shutting out honest counsellors. Pluralities continued to be showered upon him : he was given the charge of the intelligence department, the imperial elephants, the confirmation of grants and appointments (*arz-i-mukarrar*), the estates of the Begams and the Emperor's privy purse. [*TAh.* 14*b*, *D.C.*, Shākir 63.]

By reason of his being constantly with the Emperor in the harem, Jāvid Khan impressed that simpleton with a great idea of his wisdom, knowledge of administration and devotion to his person. All power passed into this eunuch's hands as the Emperor sank deeper and deeper into vice and indolence. After a time the youthful Emperor publicly referred all State questions to Jāvid Khan for decision, while he himself took refuge in the harem. The favourite was now promoted to a 7-*hazāri mansab*, given the title of Nawāb Bahādur (the Emperor's Vicar), and rewarded with the highest possible insignia of honour, namely the *māhi marātib*, standard, banner, kettledrums and a fringed *palki*. "No eunuch had ever been so exalted before, and no noble had been given the title of Nawāb [at Court.]" Well might a Delhi historian of the time reflect with sadness, "Never since Timur's time had a eunuch exercised such power in the State; hence the Government became unsettled. The hereditary peers felt humiliated by having to make their petitions through a slave and to pay court to him before any affair of State could be transacted." [*Ch. Gulz.* 399*b*; *TAh.* 15*a*, 14*b*, 25*a*.]

Jāvid Khan, though now fifty years old, was absolutely illiterate. He had never held any administrative charge, nor seen a battle in all his

life, and yet he now began to decide all questions of war and peace, revenue and organisation as the supreme authority.* Abyssinian and Turkish slaves had displayed the highest military and administrative capacity in the long roll of Muslim history in India. But Jāvid Khan was not of that breed. His vulgar ambition was to acquire supreme influence by pandering to the Emperor's vices and humouring the Queen-mother, and to use that influence to enrich himself. He assigned to himself the most lucrative jagirs and also appropriated the revenue collection that ought to have gone to feed the Emperor's household and army. His good word in the Emperor's ears was purchased by suitors for *lakhs* of Rupees.

The nobles of the realm revolted at the idea of paying their court to a slave and eunuch; the royal ministers felt insulted when the Emperor referred them to this man for orders on their official business. They stood aloof from him in aristocratic contempt. Jāvid Khan returned their hate by heaping neglect and scorn on them, gathering the poor middle-grade nobles round himself,

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* As the author of *TAh.* exclaims, "O God! where Emperors personally fought and wazirs had day and night attended to State business, this eunuch, ignorant of everything, who had never seen a battle in all his life nor even heard [its sound] in his ears, now became sole ruler!" [28*b*.]

and promoting his own base creatures to dignity and office. The result was a complete breach between the young and inexperienced Emperor and the hereditary supporters of the throne. [*TAh.* 20*b*, 15*b*.]

§ 4. *New official appointments.*

There was a new distribution of offices at the accession of the new sovereign. The vacant wazir-ship was conferred upon Safdar Jang. When the news of the late Emperor's death reached Prince Ahmad's camp at Pānipat, Safdar Jang, then in command of his escort, had improvised a royal umbrella with cloth of gold taken out of robes and banners and held it over the prince's head, crying out "I congratulate your Majesty on becoming Emperor!" and Ahmad had responded with, "I congratulate you on your wazir-ship." But in fear of Nizām-ul-mulk Asaf Jāh, Safdar Jang's appointment was kept secret; he did not receive investiture in the official robes of a wazir till 19th June, when the news of the Nizām's death at Burhānpur (on 21st May) reached Delhi, and he first sat in his office and publicly signed papers, only on the 20th of June. His son Jalāluddin Haidar was given the Superintendentship of artillery hitherto held by him (6th July.) The Chief Paymastership, rendered vacant by the death

of Asaf Jāh was conferred upon Sayyid Salābat Khan Zulfiqār Jang (29th June), who was originally known as Sādāt Khan, being a son of that Sādāt Khan whose daughter Gauhar-un-nisā had been married to Farrukh-siyar* and who had been Mir Atish under that Emperor. The First Bakhshi's post carried with it the title of Amir-ul-umarā. The Second Paymastership was bestowed on Intizām-ud-daulah Khān-i-Khānān, the eldest son of the late wazir Qamruddin and a brother of the Nizām's eldest son's wife. The *Diwāni* of Crown-lands was given to Ishaq Khan Najmuddaulah, and the *Sadr*-ship to Abdullah Khan, while S'aduddin Khan continued as Lord High Steward (*Khān-i-sāmān.*)

Among the more important provinces Lāhor had been already bestowed upon Muin-ul-milk, the second son of the late wazir, during the last days of Muhammad Shah. The *subahs* of Allahabad

* *M.U.* ii. 524-526. The daughter of Farrukh-siyar and Gauhar-un-nisā, named Mālika-uz-zamāni, was the chief wife of Muhammad Shah, while Zulfiqār Jang's own daughter, entitled Sāhiba Mahal, was married to the same Emperor and had a daughter by him named Begam Sāhiba. During the Sarhind campaign, Zulfiqār Jang, then Fourth *bakhshi*, acted as guardian to Prince Ahmad, and that prince after his coronation made him First *bakhshi* and used to address him as *Nānā Bābā* or maternal grandfather, because the childless Mālika-uz-zamāni had brought up the boy Ahmad as her own son. Jāvid Kh. grew jealous of Zulfiqār Jang and contrived to turn the Emperor against him.

and Agra had at first been given to Salābat Khan, and that of Ajmir added to Oudh which Safdar Jang held. But it was soon realised that defence required Ajmir to be held by the governor of Agra, while Allahabad was as naturally an adjunct of the province of Oudh, and an exchange of provinces between the two nobles on these lines was made. [*Siyar,* iii. 37.] Bengal had long been virtually independent under Alivardi Khan and he was wisely left undisturbed, as also was the Peshwā to whom Mālwa had been assigned in 1741. But a last desperate plan was formed for recovering Gujrāt from Maratha hands by nominating Bakht Singh Rāthor, the bravest Rajput prince then living, as its *subahdār* (29 June.) Nothing, however, came of the attempt; his secret agents sent beforehand to the province reported that the situation was hopeless, and he declined the barren honour. [*Mirāt-i-Ahmadi,* ii. 374—377.]

After keeping the subahdāri of the Deccan in abeyance for a year, the Court in April 1749, formally appointed Nāsir Jang, the second son of Asaf Jāh, to that post, with the title of Nizām-ud-daulah, in succession to his father, as he had already occupied this position on the strength of his presence in the Deccan at the head of an army, while his eldest brother Ghāzi-ud-din had been

living at Delhi for the preceding eight years. [*Hadiqat-ul-Alam,* ii. 191.]

§ 5. *How the imperial administration broke down.*

The prospect after the death of Muhammad Shah became even more gloomy than before. That monarch's habitual indolence and neglect of the administration had inevitably brought about military impotence and financial bankruptcy. There being no longer any common master to be feared and no protector to be appealed to, each noble took what he could of the public revenue; each zamindar usurped lands in his neighbourhood or levied blackmail on the roads and villages outside his jurisdiction. The Marāthas possessed themselves of the frontier provinces in the south, while their annual raids into Bengal and Orissa cut off the revenue supply from these provinces after 1746. Thus, the treasury became empty and the most abject poverty and distress subjected the Emperor and his family to public humiliation.

The mischief worked in a vicious circle. The paralysis of the central authority led to the loss by conquest or independence of the provinces, whose revenue had hitherto fed the Court and its army. The stoppage of the regular revenue made it impossible to pay the soldiers or replenish their

equipment and munitions for fitting out any expedition. Therefore, no attempt could be made to subdue any of the revolted governors or usurping zamindars and exact the dues of Government from them. Time only intensified the bankruptcy of the Court. Then followed a mad scramble among the powerful ministers and favourite Begams to take for themselves the most fertile and easy to administer jāgirs and the best revenue-yielding markets and similar rich sources of taxation. That famous fiscal milch-cow of the 17th century, the customs of the royal port of Surat, had been long lost to the empire; but the grain-markets near the capital still yielded a sure and large income, while the Jamuna canals brought a clear gain of 25 lakhs a year to their superintendent. [Safdar Jang enjoyed this last. *Asiatic Annual Register* for 1800, Misc. Tracts, 37, Polier's letter.]

Usually the best and quietest villages were set apart for the Crownlands (*Khālsa*) and the estates of the Emperor's privy purse (*sarf-i-khas.*) The very life and sustenance of the Emperor and his household depended upon this source. But in this reign all-powerful nobles like Jāvid Khan and Safdar Jang,—and in the last year Imād-ul-mulk,—began to misappropriate the revenue collected in these places, leaving only a pittance for the Emperor; they even sent their agents there to

plunder the peasants and traders, so that even this last source of revenue was cut off, and the Emperor, his family and his personal servants and guards were faced with starvation. Each noble clung to his immediate gain without a thought for the country or his own future. The provincial governors, who were now sovereigns within their own limits, lived in opulence and independence. All but three of the nobles attached to the Court or living in the capital without employment found the regular income from their estates stopped, soon spent all their accumulated wealth and lived thereafter in poverty and impotence, dismissing all their soldiers and servants. The three fortunate exceptions were Jāvid Khan, Safdar Jang, and Zulfiqār Jang, whose political predominance ensured to them adequate incomes and strong contingents of troops. The last-named, however, reduced himself to beggary by his ruinous Rajput expedition of 1750. The result was that the armed strength of the empire was annihilated for all practical purposes by this wholesale disbandment in the case of most and hopeless arrears of salary in the case of the few that were retained to guard the palace and man the artillery at the capital.*

* Shākir, 35. *TAh.* 14*b*, 20*b*, 21*a*.

The insolvency of the imperial Government made it impossible for it to pay the soldiers, whose salary fell into arrears for 14, 18, and finally 36 months. The starving troops mutinied and made riotous disturbances in the streets of Delhi, attacking the military paymasters and blocking the gates of the palace or the ministers' mansions so as to prevent ingress and egress and reduce the inmates to starvation. After the death of Amir Khan, his contingent, whose pay was due for 14 months, assembled at his gate and prevented his burial for four days, until their claims were satisfied. The monotonous tale of such riots by one or other class of soldiers in almost every month, with its sickening details, runs through the entire history of the reign of Ahmad Khan written by a loyal courtier and the terse *Delhi Chronicle.* Shākir Khan of Pānipat, a devoted hereditary servant of the house of Bābur, thus describes the tragic situation :

"After Ahmad Shah's accession, in the course of time matters came to such a pass that a descriptive list of all articles in the imperial stores,—the arms, carpets, cooking utensils and dinner plate, books and band-instruments, and of every other *kār-khānah,*—was prepared and these articles were sold to the shop-keepers and pedlars, and most of the money thus realised was spent in pay-

ing the troops. This opened the door to the most unseemly and unspeakable mockery and insult by the public. . . . . Opulence was turned into distress. The Central Asian (*vilāyati*) soldiers and the Emperor's household troops forcibly carried off the valuable articles of all kinds from the houses of *wazirs, āmirs, sāhus,* traders and artisans, to the shops [and sold them], thus reducing the nobles to disgrace. The *āmirs* had no help but to wear only the clothes they stood in and to eat off earthen plate. . . . . When the Emperor ordered an inquiry, it was found that the soldiers' salary was three years in arrear. What chance was there of a farthing remaining in the Treasury? It became a reign of petty tribal chiefs (*muluk-ut-tawāif.*) [Shākir, 34.]

§ 6. *Safdar Jang wazir, his rivals and enemies.*

Such a State could have been saved only by a wazir of Bismarckian capacity and dictatorial power. But Safdar Jang had neither. Indeed, his position was one of unusual difficulty. He was a foreign-born adventurer whose uncle had been the first of the family to enter the service of Delhi and he could not establish aristocratic connections and local influence in the course of one generation. Safdar Jang was considered an interloper by the old nobility whose pedigree went back to the reign

of Aurangzib or even earlier. Public offices had now come to be regarded as the heritable property of their holders' families, apart from any consideration of ability or training or selection by the master,—the surest sign of political decadence. The late wazir Qamruddin's son, Intizām-ud-daulah, regarded Safdar Jang as having robbed him of his father's legacy, the imperial chancellorship. Intizām's sister had been married to Ghāziuddin, the eldest son of the Nizam Asaf Jah, besides which tie the great-grandfathers of these two nobles had been full brothers. They therefore formed a closely knit family interest of the greatest prestige and power in the State. The Nizam's son had, in addition, a grievance of his own. His father had held the office of Mir Bakhshi (from 1739 to his death in 1748) and he looked upon it as his birthright. The appointment of an outsider, Salābat Khan (a friend of Safdar Jang), to that post after the Nizām's death was resented as an act of dispossession!

This clash of personal interests was aggravated by a racial antagonism. The Nizam, the late wazir Qamruddin, and Zakariya Khan (the late viceroy of the Panjab) were all Turks from Central Asia (Ahrar) and closely linked together by repeated inter-marriages. They recruited their retainers in Central Asia and from Turks settled

in India. Safdar, on the other hand, was a Persian and gathered round himself only Persians, such as the ex-soldiers of Nadir Shah and Irani immigrants (genuine or pretended) into India.

Religious difference further embittered the antagonism between the two parties. Safdar Jang was a Shia. This sect, in spite of the superior general intelligence and polished manners of the Persians, forms a very small minority among the Indian Muslims. Though the Persians are usually very good in revenue management, secretariat work and the civil administration, they lack the tough fighting capacity and power of commanding, controlling and combining subordinates in which the Turks, and even the Abyssinians, as a class often excel.

Moreover, the Shias, partly by reason of the smallness of their number and partly because of their religious and cultural inspiration being derived exclusively from Persia, tend to form a class apart and to isolate themselves from the rest of the Islamic community. This isolation is intensified by their love of inbreeding or restriction of marriage, and often of social intercourse too, within their own sect and even to Persians by race. This spirit of racial and cultural aloofness has stood in the way of their absorbing other Islamic races and Indian converts to Islam by a

rough and ready process of assimilation such as the Sunnis have everywhere adopted. A wide gulf separates the specific local Shia settlements in India from the vast and ever-growing mass of Indian Islam. The Turks, being Sunnis, have more readily amalgamated with the Indian Muhammadans,—and the Abyssinians in the Deccan,—by marriage and social communion and been able to enlist their support in strengthening their position.* This inherent weakness of the Shia position in India, as contrasted with the Sunni, proved fatal to the ambition of Safdar Jang to rule the empire of Delhi as a dominant wazir, overriding the other nobles and the Emperor.

Small as is the proportion of the Shias to Indian Islam, Safdar Jang could rally round himself only a fraction of this fraction. Most of the Indian Shias stood aloof from him in unconcern. They resented the superior and scornful airs which the Persians assume towards other races even of their own creed. The mocking tongue and mordant wit of the native Persians are unrivalled elsewhere in Asia, as many anecdotes of Aurangzib illustrate. They scoffed at the Indian Muhammadans as clownish and their Persian idiom as

* Ghulām Ali adds that the Hindu Rajahs sided with the Turani or Sunni party because they found that in Hindustan all the Muslim chiefs were and had been Sunnis. [*Imād,* 60.]

barbarous. Hence, Safdar Jang's clientele formed only a very small minority of Muslim India.

§ 7. *Court conspiracies for overthrowing Safdar Jang.*

Safdar Jang had been appointed wazir, but his position was one more of weakness and danger than of power. Any attempt on his part to exert his legitimate control on the administration as the first servant of the State would antagonise Jāvid Khan, the real power behind the throne. But a more immediate and persistent danger sprang from the ill-concealed hostility of the sons of the late wazir Qamruddin. Their own resources were inadequate for ousting him from the chancellorship: Intizam was as yet only second Bakhshi, and Muin had his hands full in the Panjab with Abdali threatening him from outside and the Sikhs from within. So their only hope lay in their cousin Nāsir Jang, the heir of the Nizam.

The fickle brainless Emperor was soon induced to take a dislike to Safdar Jang. At the instigation of Jāvid Khan he wrote a secret letter to Nāsir Jang, inviting him to come to Delhi with a strong force and expel Safdar Jang from his office. The favourite eunuch, who dreaded an able and spirited wazir as the only bar to his own

supremacy, also sent a similar message of his own to the Nizam's successor. But Nāsir Jang could not start immediately. Preparations for a trial of strength with the wazir of the empire required time and money. The defence and administration of his six Deccan provinces during his absence in the north involved deep planning and careful arrangement, and he had just cause to be anxious about his nephew Hedāyet Muhiuddin (Muzaffar Jang) who was cherishing designs for the succession to Asaf Jāh. It was, therefore, several months before Nāsir Jang could leave his charge, and by 25th May 1749 he had only reached the south bank of the Narmada at Akbarpur when he received a hurried letter from the Emperor, countermanding his march and ordering him back to the Deccan, of which he was in the same letter formally appointed *subahdār*. This sudden reversal of policy needs explanation. [*Hadiqat-ul-ālam,* ii. 190.]

Safdar Jang had publicly assumed the wazir's office on 20th June 1748. Within five months of it his enemies struck their first blow at him. On 20th November he was returning from the Idgah plain after the public prayer and had almost reached the entrance to the vaulted arcade leading to his own residence (once the mansion of Prince Dara Shukoh) close to the canal in the Nigambodh

quarter of the city (north of the modern Calcutta Gate of Delhi Fort), and the holiday crowd in that narrow street had checked his movement, when a sudden discharge of light pieces (*rahkala*) rocket and carbine from a shop on the right hand side struck his *cortege*. His horse and two or three servants riding before him were fatally wounded; Safdar Jang himself fell down but escaped without injury. A search revealed that these fire-arms had been planted behind a screen on the projecting terrace of a shop, trained at the level of a rider going through the street below, and their fire had missed the wazir by inches. It was the work of a very skilled artilleryist, but he could not be detected in spite of all inquiries. The room was found deserted and closed from behind, evidently an instant after the discharge. The popular belief was that the miscreant had been set on by Intizām-ud-daulah and afterwards concealed by him. Safdar Jang ordered that quarter of the city to be sacked. The sparks from the rocket had burnt the thatched roofs of the shops in that street, and now the wazir dismantled all the houses from the steps of the canal to his own mansion. Hindu monks had been living on the river bank in this Nigambodh quarter from time immemorial; they were now ejected and the wazir's men took up residence there. [*TAh.* 17*b*;

Bayān 248; Shākir 71; *Muz.* 9; *D. C.* But *Siyar*, *Imād* and *Chah. Gulz.* silent.]

The wazir, in fear of further attempts on his life, gave up attending Court and removed to tents outside the city (25th Nov.)

Thus an open breach took place between the Emperor and his prime minister. It was during this period that the Court secretly invited Nāsir Jang to come and deliver them. That noble outwardly gave it out that he was going to Delhi merely to pay his respects to his new sovereign; but he wrote to his brother Ghāziuddin at Court that his real object was to put the administration of the Empire in order, oust the intruder Safdar Jang, and give the wazir-ship to Intizām-ud-daulah. At the same time he tried to humour Safdar Jang by writing to him, "I have only to chastise the Marathas here, and then I shall go to Court. Do you befriend me and secure my appointment to the subahdāri of the Deccan. I only want [in addition] the Chief Paymastership of the Empire which my father held and which Zulfiqār Jang has snatched away from me. You and I shall turn with one heart to the regulation of the State. Bālāji has seized the Empire, even up to Hindustan. If you rely on him, you will be disappointed. He is a great deceiver; he looks to money and nothing else. Give me a safe-

conduct and oaths of assurance from the Court and we two shall unite for punishing Bālāji. I am at your orders."

Safdar Jang showed this letter in the original to Hinganė, the Maratha envoy at Delhi, who easily exposed Nāsir Jang's double-dealing by revealing what he had written to his elder brother. He warned the wazir to be on his guard against the deep machinations of the Turāni party, as this letter was merely a device for estranging Safdar from the Peshwā and then crushing him in his isolation. [*S. P. D.* ii. 13.] Safdar Jang needed no such warning; he instinctively knew the Nizām's family for his mortal enemies. On learning that Nāsir Jang had actually started for the north, the wazir took the defensive measure of posting his Maratha allies (Malhar Holkar and Jayāji Sindhia) in Kotā, to intercept Nāsir Jang and thus prevent the ravages of war from reaching his own subahs north of the Chambal. At the same time he sent the following appeal to the Peshwa through Hinganė: "This is the time for testing our alliance. If you are truly my friend, then your generals ought to oppose Nāsir Jang. I am supplying Hinganė with funds for equipping an army [of Marathas] and making all arrangements for fighting Nāsir Jang. If the Marathas will not do so, I have 50,000 men under me and

shall raise more from all sides." [*S. P. D.* ii. 12*e*, 13.]

His bold speech and bolder preparations for striking the first blow, effectually cowed the craven Emperor and his eunuch. On 7th April 1749, Ahmad Shah taking his mother with him paid a visit to Safdar Jang in his tents and pacified him by this open sign of humility and promises of friendly support, and brought him with himself to the palace. As the price of the reconciliation, he signed a *farmān* ordering Nāsir Jang to turn back immediately on the receipt of the letter, wherever it might find him, while to soothe his feelings he was formally appointed subahdār of the Deccan with the title of Nizām-ud-daulah. [*Hadiqat-ul-ālam,* ii. 191, *Bayān* 248; *TAh.* 18*b*, 35*b*.]

§ 8. *Downfall of Salābat Khan, Mir Bakhshi.*

A few months after this settlement of dispute, the wazir became deeply entangled in Rohilkhand which kept him busy from November 1749 to September 1750, and again from February 1751 to April 1752. During the second period of his absence from Delhi, he lost his chief supporter at Court. Salābat Khan, the Head Bakhshi, returned from his Rajput expedition at the beginning of November 1750, a ruined man. His

huge army of 18,000 men besides a corps of artillery, kept together for a full year, cost him 60 *lakhs* of Rupees at the lowest estimate, and he had not been able to collect more than five *lakhs* in cash as contribution from Rajputana. As a financial speculation, this adventure had utterly failed. His subahdari of Agra and Ajmir yielded him no revenue, thanks to his fatuous policy of antagonising the Jats, who alone could have kept that region in order. His repeated applications to Government for assistance were shelved by the all-powerful eunuch. The imperial treasury had not the means and Jāvid Khan had not the wish to help him out of his difficulties, because he did not owe his appointment to Jāvid Khan's favour, and, as a hereditary peer whose family had given two daughters and one grand-daughter in wedlock to the Emperors of Delhi, he scorned to pay court to that upstart slave.

His starving soldiers daily dunned him for the arrears of their pay and made his life unbearable. So, in disgust he shut himself up in his mansion, dismissed his retainers and gave up visiting the Court or doing any official work. To his friends' remonstrances he used to reply, "There is no Emperor here. Why should we go to the *darbār* of a eunuch to be insulted? To whom shall I state my case that I may be heard?"

Jāvid Khan represented this speech to the young Emperor and his mother as proof of a plot to set up another prince on the throne. Grown desperate at last, Salābat one day went to the palace and tried to make a personal appeal to the Emperor. The porters, by Jāvid Khan's previous orders, stopped him; and then grown wilder at this check he burst into abuse of the idiotic Emperor and his base favourite. This was the development that Jāvid Khan had been working up to. Salābat was at once deprived of all his offices, rank and titles (7th June 1751.) His personal estates were confiscated and guns were planted round his house, keeping him a prisoner within it. He sold everything he had and discharged the claims of his soldiery as far as possible, and thereafter lived in utter poverty and seclusion like a *darvish*. [*TAh.* 29*a*-30*a*; *Siyar*, iii. 40; *Muz.* 34.]

Next, by a shrewd stroke of policy, Jāvid Khan caused the Chief Paymastership to be given to Ghāzi-ud-din Khan, with the title of Amir-ul-umara and the subahdari of Agra, while his brother-in-law Intizām-ud-daulah was appointed subahdār of Ajmir with the title of Khan-i-Khānān, (7th June 1751.) Thus the two heads of the Turāni party were promoted to the highest positions in the State next to the wazir's, to serve as a check on Safdar Jang, at the same time that

the wazir's strongest ally was effectually crushed. Jāvid Khan had killed two birds with one shot. The news of the murder of Nāsir Jang (on 5th December, 1750) had reached Delhi on 16th January 1751, and five days later his eldest brother Ghāzi-ud-din Khan Firuz Jang had been nominated subahdār of the Deccan with the title of Nizām-ul-mulk. But when he began his southward march, at the first stage, Sarāi Qāzi, 6 miles outside Delhi, his soldiers in a body refused to follow him unless their long outstanding salaries were paid up to date. He paid them, and for the future offered them a reduction of salary to Rs. 30 a month for each trooper or dismissal. Most of his men, being inhabitants of Delhi, preferred to resign and stay at home. This so fully depleted his strength that he was forced to give up his march and stop there. [*TAh.* 29, 36*b; Siyar* ii. 43; *D. C.* But *Imād* 61 differs.]

§ 9. *Plan for a Maratha subsidiary alliance against Abdali.*

Ever since the beginning of Abdali's attack on Lahor, the Emperor had been sending appeals to his wazir to patch up a treaty with the Ruhelas and hasten back to the defence of Delhi, lest the horrors of Nādir's conquest should be repeated by the new invader from Afghanistan. But Safdar

Jang after concluding the Ruhela campaign, dismissed his Maratha allies, and went to his own province of Oudh to restore its administration which had been completely upset by the death of its governor Naval Rai and the long absence of the subahdar himself in Rohilkhand. While the absentee first minister of the realm was thus neglecting his duty to the State and only looking after his private interests in the eastern provinces, Lahor fell to the Afghan on 6th March and the news of it reached Delhi on the 13th, causing the greatest consternation there. Most people sent their women outside the capital, chiefly to Mathura, which was then in the strong hands of the Jāt Rājah; and for some days no grain reached Delhi from the villages. The Emperor wrote a most peremptory order of recall to Safdar Jang, urging him to bring a strong Maratha force with him at any price. This letter reached Safdar Jang on the 17th, but he took a week's time to start, and sent off messengers for stopping the Maratha army which had by this time reached the bank of the Ganges on its return to Malwa. Overtaking it, he arranged for a defensive subsidiary treaty with the Peshwa on the following terms:—

(1) The Emperor was to pay the Peshwa fifty lakhs of Rupees for his armed support, out of which thirty lakhs was the price of keeping

the Abdali out. (2) One-fourth of the imperial revenue (*chauth*) in the subahs of the Panjab and Sindh and the four mahals (Siālkot, Pasrur. Aurangabad, and Gujrāt),—the revenue of which mahals had been ceded to Nādir Shah and after him to the Abdali, and the districts of Hisar, Sambal, Moradabad, and Budaun, was assigned to the Marathas for their military expenses. Half the revenue of these places was to be paid into the imperial exchequer for the support of the Emperor and the remaining quarter was to be devoted to paying the contingents of the wazir and Javid Khan.

(3) The Peshwa was to be appointed *subahdār* of Ajmir (including the faujdāri of Nārnol) and of Agra (including the faujdari of Mathura and other subdivisions) and entitled to the sanctioned remuneration and customary perquisites of subahdars and faujdars.

(4) The Peshwa, through his generals, was to suppress all enemies of the State, foreign invaders and domestic rebels alike, and wrest the lands usurped by local Rajahs and zamindars and restore them to the imperial officers.

(5) The Peshwā was to govern these subahs exactly in conformity with the established rules of the Empire, respect the rights of all loyal jagirdars and officers, and never grasp any land

or money not thus specifically granted to him. Nor should he interfere with the law-courts and forts directly under the imperial Government within the *subahs* thus assigned to him. Of the lands recovered from usurpers and revenue-defaulters, the Marathas were to get one-half to meet the expenses of conquest.

(6) The Maratha generals were to attend at the imperial Court like other high mansabdars and to join in the campaigns of the imperial army.

To save the face of the Emperor, a solemn undertaking on the above terms, calling upon all the Hindu gods to attest the fidelity of the signatories, was presented to the Emperor by Malhar Holkar and Jayāji Sindhia on behalf of the Peshwa, and thereupon the Emperor issued a gracious *farman* granting the prayer and recounting all the clauses of the undertaking in its preamble. [Rajwade, i. 1].

For meeting the Afghan menace, Safdar Jang advocated the plan of placing the Marathas practically in possession of the north-western frontier province though under the Emperor's suzerainty, so that it would be their interest to resist Abdali, and the Emperor would be relieved of the task of defending it. This was an anticipation of the policy which Wellesley adopted when he made the English hold the ceded

districts along the western border of Oudh, so as to face Sindhia's dominions and bar the path of Maratha advance into the Company's territory. Safdar Jang even talked of reconquering Kabul with Maratha help. For the defence of the southern frontier he proposed to send Bakht Singh with other Rajput princes to hold the line of the Narmada against any treacherous Maratha encroachment northwards across that river. But his whole scheme was strangled at its birth and the subsidiary treaty with the Peshwā was turned into a scrap of useless paper by the formal surrender of the Panjab and Sindh to Abdali by the craven Emperor during Safdar Jang's absence and the departure of the Afghan envoy Qalandar Beg Khan with an imperial rescript embodying the surrender only twelve days before Safdar Jang's return. The wazir's partisans threw the responsibility for this cowardly submission on Jāvid Khan, who was the Emperor's sole adviser at the time, but the blame must be shared in a still greater degree by Safdar Jang, who did not care to come to Delhi with the speed that the critical situation of the capital demanded, but most unreasonably delayed on the way, leaving the Emperor and the city of Delhi absolutely undefended and helpless in the event of a cavalry

dash by the victorious Abdali from Lahor. [*TAh.* 33*b*; Shākir 65.]

Safdar Jang had started from Oudh on 24th March, but he took 33 days to reach Delhi. In view of the imminence of the crisis at the capital this snail-slow movement over a road which fast couriers covered in four days only, had but one explanation. He rejoiced to see the late wazir's viceroy son entirely crushed in the Panjab and thus to have one less head of the Turāni party to dread [*TAh.* 18*b*, 30*b*], and he deliberately prolonged the imperial Court's agony of terror and suspense in order to enhance his own importance and power there on his return as its sole deliverer.

§ 10. *Quarrel between Safdar Jang and Javid Khan about paying subsidy to Marathas.*

Safdar Jang arrived with a Maratha army of 50,000 men, on the bank of the Jamunā opposite Delhi on 25th April. Next day Jāvid Khan paid him a visit there. The wazir wanted to push on to the Panjāb with his allies and expel the Afghans; but Jāvid told him that peace had been made already by the cession of that province to Abdāli. Safdar was surprised and angered. He had bound himself, by order of the Emperor, to pay the Marathas 50 lakhs of Rupees for the defence of the realm, and he naturally asked how

he was to keep this promise. This controversy embittered their feelings, and the wazir indignantly refused to enter the city but kept to his tents on the other side of the river.

The Marathas, not getting their promised subsidy, halted near Delhi. Their foraging parties daily spread over the villages for 40 miles round and brought back whatever provisions they could seize. "Thousands were ruined by their oppression and the surrounding country was desolated. On the west bank of the Jamunā, towards Bādli, Rewāri and other places, not a village remained unplundered." A great terror hung over the capital itself; so long as the Maratha claims remained unsatisfied, they might any day have broken into the city and helped themselves to its riches, with none to defend it while the exasperated wazir stood aloof. Therefore, Jāvid Khan himself opened negotiations with Malhar, who jumped at this chance of a mutual accommoda-tion with the Delhi Government in consequence of an internal revolution in the Maratha State.

This needs explanation. On the death of Nāsir Jang (5th December 1750), the Emperor had appointed his eldest brother Ghāzi-ud-din to the vacant *subahdāri* of the Deccan (21st January 1751.) This selection had been pressed on him by the Peshwā, who had been solicited by Ghazi-

uddin for his good word with the Emperor, and who now promised Maratha support to the imperial administration in the Deccan if he was made Nizām. Ghāzi-ud-din had been always friendly to the Peshwā and his military incapacity and easy unenterprising character promised to the Marathas the practical domination of Mughal Deccan with such a man as its nominal viceroy. The new Nizām, however, had no adequate force to enable him to take possession of his southern charge, and so he delayed starting. A few months later (7th June) he was appointed Mir Bakhshi and was obliged to stay at Court. He then appointed the Peshwā as his deputy *subahdār*. But Ghazi-ud-din's younger brothers living in the Deccan refused to give the Hindu interloper possession of their patrimony, and by influencing Jāvid Khan secured a patent for the deputy subahdār-ship in the name of Salābat Jang, the third son of the late Asaf Jāh.

Balaji resisted Salābat's agents wherever his forces could reach and a war broke out between them. In this Salābat Jang found an unexpected ally. Shāhu had died on 15 December 1749 and Rāmrājā had succeeded him on the Maratha throne. This imbecile youth was soon overpowered and placed in confinement by the imperious ex-queen Tara Bai, who formed a league

of the chiefs of the warrior-caste (Marathas) against the usurped domination of the priestly Peshwās. In the civil war that followed, while Balaji was fighting Dāmāji Gaikwād and his Gujrat army and Raghuji Bhonsle was menacing him from the Berar side, Salābat Jang invaded Maharashtra with his French contingent and forced his way to Punā (Nov. 1751—March 1752.) The Peshwā had to patch up a truce and induce the invader to return to Haidarabad.* While Balaji was being thus hard pressed and his partisans scattered, his devoted follower Malhar Holkar tried to secure relief for him from the side of Delhi. He agreed that if Ghāzi-ud-din himself went to the Deccan as subahdar, the Marāthas would totally absolve the imperial Government from its obligation to pay those 50 *lakhs* and would march away from Delhi with Ghaziuddin. Nay more, they would be satisfied with 30 *lakhs* only, which would be payable by the new Nizām.

When first appointed subahdar of the Deccan in 1751, Ghaziuddin had been made to promise a huge *peshkash* of 2 *krores* and 80 *lakhs* of Rupees, but he could pay only 15 lakhs (one lakh of gold coins.) In April 1752 when it was settled that he should march to the Deccan escorted by Malhar, the *peshkash* was reduced to a mere

* Full details in *Hadiqat-ul-alam*, ii. 230-233.

promise of 60 lakhs, one half of which he undertook to pay to the Marathas engaged by the wazir in full satisfaction of their claims. To expedite the departure of these unwelcome guests, Jāvid Khan paid a few lakhs in cash to Malhar, and so they left the environs of Delhi on 4th May, nine days after their arrival. Peace returned to the capital and the fugitive citizens brought their families back to the city. All these arrangements were done by the eunuch overriding the wazir and even without the knowledge of the latter. Not a pice came to the impoverished imperial exchequer as the succession fee of the richest subahdari in the Mughal dominions. [*TAh.* 33*b*-37*b*. *Siyar,* iii. 44 incorrect. *Had-al,* ii. 235-236.]

Thus Jāvid Khan was entrenched in permanent opposition to Safdar Jang, spoiling all the plans of the wazir unless heavily bribed to support him. A long series of unfriendly acts had marked the eunuch's attitude towards the wazir. He had secretly invited Nasir Jang to come and oust Safdar Jang (1748); he had prompted the Emperor to demand Safdar Jang's resignation as a disgraced man after his defeat by Ahmad Bangash (1750) and he had been induced to withdraw the order only for a present of several lakhs of Rupees; he had dismissed Safdar Jang's strongest friend

Salābat Khan Mir Bakhshi and promoted his bitterest enemies, the heads of the Turāni party. Every attempt of Safdar to take the Emperor out on campaign and restore the imperial authority in the provinces had been foiled by Jāvid's influence over that foolish youth. The wazir found that owing to his long absences from the Court on the Ruhela campaigns and administrative visits to Oudh, he had been completely effaced and the supreme executive authority in the State and the dominating influence over the Emperor had passed to the eunuch. In short, Safdar Jang felt that he could not function as imperial Chancellor, but had become a nullity and a public scorn because of the malign power behind the throne. And now the affair of Balu Jāt precipitated the storm which had been gathering all these years.

§ 11. *History of Balaram Jat.*

Balarām Jāt (popularly called Balu) was the son of a petty revenue-collector (*chaudhuri*) of Faridabad, 18 miles south of Delhi. Supported by his family connection with Badan Singh, the Jat Rajah of Bharatpur, he extended his power by seizing the neighbouring villages and ousting their lawful owners and the local magistrates. Such a thorn could not be tolerated in the road between Delhi and Agra. So, when Balu Jat's

men expelled the imperial outpost at Shamspur, the wazir sent another force there. But it was boldly resisted by the Jat, and Safdar Jang himself marched against him. The wazir had only reached Khizirābād (probably on 30 June 1750) when Balarām in terror came and made a humble submission through the Maratha envoy, and was sent back to his home after a few days, on his promising to be the wazir's follower. He built a mud fort and named it Ballamgarh, (five miles south of Faridabad) and by leasing the revenue-collection of Palwal and Faridābād (which lay in the Nizām's jāgir) soon made himself a district governor and noble (*rāi.*) [*TAh.* 22*b*-23*a*; *D.C.* But *Chah. Gulz.* 402*a* differs.]

On 2nd July 1752 when Safdar Jang was removing from his camp across the Jamunā to his mansion in Delhi city, Jāvid Khan issued from the fort and sat down in the Anguri-bagh garden, expecting Safdar Jang to visit him there on the way and pay his respects, for was he not the Emperor's deputy? But the wazir declined to honour the eunuch in this way and rode straight on to his house. Jāvid, to save his face, called Balu Jat, who happened to be in Delhi at the time, held a Court with him, gave him a robe of honour, and then returned to his quarters in the fort. He had seduced the Jāt from Safdar Jang's

side in the meantime. What mischievous instructions the infuriated eunuch now gave to Balu we can only guess from the subsequent acts of the latter. From Delhi Balu went to his home, collected his troops and crossing over to Sikandrabad attacked and expelled the local faujdar, and plundered the city, digging up the floors of the houses. Seizing the local tradesmen, he hung them up and flogged them to extort money. Now, Sikandrabad is only 32 miles from Delhi and belonged to the Emperor's privy purse estate. The aggrieved people sent messengers to Delhi who complained to the Emperor in that night's Court. Safdar who was present asked Jāvid Khan, "If Balu has been appointed by you as the new faujdar of the place, why is he plundering and slaying the people there? If he is acting against your wishes, let me go there and punish him." Jāvid replied that he would himself undertake the chastisement of Balu. He sent his captain, Narsingh Rāi with a small force to Sikandrabad, but this man, instead of attacking Balu, only parleyed with him and let him go away scotfree with his booty and take refuge in the fort of Dankaur (15 miles due east of Ballamgarh) in Jāvid Khan's jāgir. When Safdar Jang's troops arrived there, they found this situation. After some fighting with them, Balu secured boats in that fort

and effected his escape to Ballamgarh in safety. Thus no punishment could be inflicted on the plunderer of the Emperor's personal estate and a place so near the capital. The people of Sikandrabad cried for justice, but in vain. At this futile end of the campaign, Safdar Jang, in open Court, taxed Jāvid Khan with backing Balu in these evil deeds, and the eunuch hung his head down in silence. [*TA h.* 38*a*-40*a*; Shākir, 71.]

This made the cup of Safdar Jang's indignation boil over. Some historians of the time even assert that the Emperor himself was moved by the misery of his direct tenants to send word to Safdar Jang to get rid of the mischievous eunuch. But if he really did so, it must have been in a temporary outburst of anger. [*Bayān,* 274; *Imād.* 60, *Kh-am.* 85.]

§ 12. *Murder of Javid Khan, 27 Aug. 1752.*

Safdar Jang called Suraj Mal to Delhi for counsel and assistance. The Jat prince arrived and encamped near Kālkāpahāri, some 14 miles from the city. With him came an agent of the Jaipur Rajah and Balu Jat, each at the head of a force. Jāvid Khan wished that these men should interview him first and negotiate with the Government through him, because in the past they used to solicit his patronage and court his favour. But

as the wazir was now present at the capital, they did not take the eunuch as their mediator. It was then settled that Jāvid Khan should go to the wazir's house and there the two together should grant interviews to Sural Mal and the others and settle their business with the Emperor. The 27th of August was fixed for the meeting. Jāvid Khan went to Safdar Jang's house early in the day and the two breakfasted together. Suraj Mal came in the afternoon and the discussion was prolonged. After a while Safdar Jang led Javid Khan away by the hand to an alcove or bastion of the house and talked about Suraj Mal in privacy. Then Muhammad Ali Jārji and some other Turkish soldiers entered the alcove; the wazir rose up; Muhammad Ali stabbed Jāvid Khan in the liver from behind, crying out, "Take the fruit of your disloyalty," the other men came up and finished the deed of blood. Then they severed his head and flung it amidst the eunuch's retainers sitting down on the ground outside the wazir's mansion, and his trunk on the sandy bank of the river. These men fled away in terror. The deed stifled all hostile movements by its very audacity. All the stores and treasuries of the murdered man within and outside the fort were sealed up and his various offices were at once taken charge of by the aged superintendent of the harem, Roz-āf-

zun Khan, and no tumult disturbed Delhi at the time.*

The murder of Jāvid Khan was worse than a crime; it was a political blunder. It antagonised the Emperor and his mother and all the imperial household against Safdar Jang beyond hope of reconciliation. Worst of all it transferred the leadership of the Court party and the control of the puppet Emperor from the hands of a foolish and timid eunuch to those of a noble of the highest birth and the ablest, most energetic, most far-sighted and most ruthlessly ambitious man in the empire, as we shall see in Chapter XI.

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* *TAh.* 40*a*-41*b*; *Siyar,* iii. 45; Shākir 71; *Bayān* 273; *Muz.* 60-62. But *Chahār Gul.* 408*a* says that there was a terrible tumult and noise in Delhi that evening for six hours after the deed. *Muz.* 62 admits that such of Javid Khan's belongings as had accompanied his *cortege* to Safdar Jang's house were plundered by Mughalia troops and the ruffians of the city, (very probable.) This last author praises Jāvid Khan for his buildings, namely, a mansion on the bank of the Jamuna, the *Matin-i-mazhab* mosque with gilt domes in front of the fort, a strong wall around the marketplace of Haidarganj, a deep and spacious well (*bāoli*) and a bridge near Haidarganj, and adds:

He is not dead, who leaves behind him on earth
Bridge and church, well and travellers' rest-house.

CHAPTER IX.

Safdar Jang's contests with the Afghans, 1748—1752.

§ 1. *Ali Muhammad Ruhela's successors.*

We have seen in Chapter II how Ali Muhammad Ruhela had swiftly recovered possession of Rohilkhand in March-April 1748. But he lived to enjoy his triumph for less than six months. He was stricken down by cancer in the back and died on the 15th September of the same year. Of his six sons, the two eldest, Faizullah and Abdullah, were held captives in Qandahar, whither Abdali had sent them after his capture of Sarhind, and the other four were still very young. "Summoning, therefore, his chiefs around him, he made his will before them . . . . His third son Sadullah was to be his successor until, if ever, his elder sons returned. Rahmat Khān was to be regent (*hāfiz*) and Dundi Khān commander-in-chief . . . . Fatti Khan was to be steward (khān-i-sāmān) with the special care of his three younger sons, while Sardār Khan was appointed paymaster of the troops. These chiefs were enjoined to consult together when any

common danger required their concerted action." (*Bareilly Gazetteer,* 661; *G-i-R.* 28) Thus the administration of the vast heritage of Ali Muhammad Ruhela was entrusted to an oligarchy of chiefs and the territory practically partitioned among them. The exile of some and the minority of others of the heirs made this inevitable, if the Afghāns were to save themselves from conquest and expulsion by their hostile and powerful neighbours. "Hāfiz Rahmat, Dundi Khan and others were each the father-in-law of a son of Ali Muhammad and in the names of their sons-in-law divided these conquests of Ali Muhammad among themselves and brought the lands into their own hands. Giving a few villages for sustenance to their sons-in-law, they themselves enjoyed the rest in royal pomp." (*Siyar,* iii. 27. The actual partition as made in 1751 is described in *G-i-R.* 45.) "Sadullah was of so dissipated a character that the whole charge of the revenue and the management of the troops still devolved on Hāfiz." The parganahs of Sambal, Morādābād, Thākurdwārā and Kāshipur were given to Dundi Khan for the support of himself and his contingent of 12,000 horse and foot. Pilibhit was the centre of Hāfiz's own jagir. Similar grants were made to the other Ruhela *sardārs.* (*G-i-R.* 45.)

Hāfiz Rahmat Khan (born about 1709) was

the grandson of an Afghan priest and saint, settled at Turu Shahāmatpur. His father had once been the master of Dāud, the adoptive father of Ali Muhammad Khan, and Rahmat on migrating to India had become Ali Muhammad's right hand man by reason of his extraordinary intelligence, administrative capacity, inborn military genius and honesty of character. He had promoted his patron's conquests, in the years following Nādir's invasion, at the expense of the Hindu Rajahs and Mughal jāgirdārs. [*G-i-R.* 13-20.]

The death of Ali Muhammad and the exile of his grown-up sons revived Shaikh Qutbuddin's ambition. He bitterly hated the Afghan race as interlopers in his patrimony and longed to oust them and gain the *faujdāri* of Rohilkhand which his grandfather had once held. Now was his opportunity. He importuned Intizāmuddaulah (the eldest son of the late wazir Qamruddin), who was officially faujdār of Moradabad, to send him to that district as his deputy to take possession of it. Intizām agreed (*c.* 15 Nov. 1748), but could not help his infatuated agent with the necessary money and materials. However, a number of soldiers joined in the adventure, lured by Qutbuddin's fame as a gallant fighter, and he thus got together a band of some 7,000 men. Crossing the Ganges, he pushed through the Bijnor district

towards Moradabad, but at Dhāmpur, 38 miles north-west of that town, he was confronted by a vastly superior Ruhela army under Dundi Khan with abundance of artillery and munitions. Scornfully rejecting the Afghan proposal to divide the land amicably, Qutbuddin gave them battle but fell after a desperate charge at the head of a handful of devoted followers. [*Siyar*, iii. 28, *Muz.* 36-37, *Bijnor Gaz.* 349.]

§ 2. *Qaim Bangash attacks Ruhelas; battle of Daunri.*

This attempt to restore imperial authority in Rohilkhand failed at the beginning of 1749. But for sometime afterwards it could not be renewed, because Safdar Jang, the natural enemy of the Ruhelas, was then sulking in his tent outside Delhi in resentment at the attempt on his life made in the streets of the capital on the preceding 20th of November, which he ascribed to the Court favourites. The young Emperor had to visit him in his camp in order to placate him (7th April,) and gradually the breach between Emperor and wazir was healed. A new plan was formed by Safdar Jang to suppress the Ruhela usurpers. "He did not like Afghān rule in a district so close to his *subah* . . . and looked upon the Ruhelas as serpents infesting his road to Delhi" (Ashub,

ii. 426.) He planned to uproot one Afghān by means of another, so that whichever side lost, he would have one enemy the less.

Ali Muhammad was believed to have left fabulous wealth. Safdar Jang appealed to Qāim Khan's cupidity and ambition and sent him an imperial *farmān* appointing him *faujdār* of Rohilkhand. Qāim Khan at first hesitated to accept this dangerous office but was persuaded by his favourite officer, Mahmud Khan Afridi (the *Bakhshi.*) He sent Muazzam Khan (the brother of his Bakhshi) to the Ruhela leaders asking them to vacate the imperial territory they had usurped and not to oppose him in taking charge of his office. In return he assured them the possession of *jāgirs* sufficient to maintain 5,000 soldiers. Hāfiz Rahmat the regent replied that as the Afghāns had conquered the country when the Emperor could not, he would acknowledge no master but the Emperor, and that it would be proper for Qāim Khan to decline the office as his appointment had originated with the wazir who had taken all power out of the Emperor's hands. When Qāim's envoy resorted to high words, he was turned out of Aonla in disgrace. Qāim Khan had sent some flags of his own with orders to set them up in Barily and other towns as badges of his authority; the

Ruhelas planted them upside down in derision. (*G-i-R*. 29, *Imād*. 44.)

When his insulted messenger returned to Qāim Khan, that noble in anger issued forth to battle. Leaving Farrukhabad on 2nd Nov. 1749, he crossed the Ganges at Qādirganj and marched towards Aonla. Meantime the Ruhela army had left Aonla and formed an entrenched camp near the village of Daunri, four miles south-east of Budāun city. Here Qāim Khan* arrived on the 11th, and rejecting a friendly message of dissuasion which Hafiz Rahmat had sent by three holy Sayyids, he engaged the enemy the next day.

The battle began in the morning. Two divisions under Qāim and Muazzam Khan attacked the southern and northern corners of the grove in which the Ruhelas were posted under Dundi Khan and Sadullah Khan respectively. At first the assaulting columns, headed by numerous elephants, seemed to carry everything before them. Dundi Khan's guns were captured, and that chief had to dismount and lead his men in

* Qaim's army is reported as 60,000 horse and foot, 400 elephants, and a large train of artillery, while the Ruhela force is given as 25,000 strong. (*G-i-R*. 30.) The numbers appear to be inflated, but at all events Qaim Khan had a decided superiority of numbers and in heavy artillery. The place of battle is called *Dumri* and also "between the villages of Daunri and Rasulpur."

a hand to hand fight. Sadullah was in imminent danger when reinforcements arrived and turned the scale against the invaders; Muazzam Khan and his brother as well as several sons of Muhammad Khan Bangash were shot down. Then Qāim Khan himself headed a charge with his lieutenants and Hindu allies, and the Ruhelas gave way, running into a long and deep ravine behind the battlefield, hotly pursued by Qāim Khan and his division. It soon became a death-trap for him, for the quick eye of Hāfiz Rahmat had already taken in the situation and planted an ambush there. The steep crests of the ravine were covered with thick tall crops of *bajra* (spiked millet) in which 8,000 Afghans were placed, completely concealed from view, their matchlocks loaded and resisting on the ground.

The fugitives from the field rushing along the ravine were on foot; the ground was wellknown to them. They quickly clambered up the left bank of it like monkeys and disappeared in the plantation on the top. The exultant pursuers poured down the narrow pass on their heels and had crossed nearly half of it, when suddenly two broad sheets of flame burst forth from the dense bushes above them, as eight thousand musket balls were poured down into their tumultuous and crowded ranks from almost point blank range.

The leaders, who were riding on elephants and in front, were too conspicuous targets to escape; they were shot down in a few minutes. Seizing the confusion, the Afghāns charged down the two banks sword in hand, yelling in triumph. The rest was butchery; only the hindmost could escape from that valley of death. The other divisions of the invading army fled away on hearing of this disaster to their vanguard.

Qāim Khan, shot through the forehead, lay dead in his *hāuda.* His driver was leading the elephant out of the field when two Ruhela troopers overtook it, robbed the dead chief of his rich clothes and jewels, and cut off his head. The Afghān victory was complete; Qāim Khan himself, with several of his brothers and nearly all his captains, had fallen on the field. A vast amount of booty with all his guns and elephants fell into the victors' hands. The chivalrous Hāfiz Rahmat had the head of Qaim Khan sewn on to his trunk, covered the corpse with *shals,* placed it in a *palki,* and sent it with due honour to Farrukhabad for burial. He also showed wise moderation in the hour of victory. All the possessions of the Bangash house on the left or eastern bank of the Ganges (except three parganahs) were annexed by the Ruhela regent no doubt, but he dissuaded his victory-flushed

clansmen from crossing the river and invading Qāim Khan's territories on its western bank, saying that the Afghāns should not destroy one another by intestine war.*

§ 3. *Safdar Jang seizes the Bangash possessions.*

Imām Khan, the eleventh son of Muhammad Khan Bangash, was raised to the lordship of Farrukhabad by his mother Bibi Sāhiba, but he had little ability or power. The tough old lady also planned to enlist Marātha support by offering a subsidy of 20 lakhs of Rupees to their *sardārs* in Northern India. (*Bayan*, 251.) What followed Qāim Khan's death throws a lurid light on the morality of the Delhi Government in that age and explains its downfall as an act of divine justice. The wazir, instead of reasserting his master's authority and avenging the fall of his agent, seized this opportunity of enriching himself at the expense of his helpless dupe. He revived the obsolete Mughal practice of escheating the property of dead nobles, and induced the Emperor to order the attachment of Qāim Khan's lands and property, as there was none left to defend them. Taking the Emperor with him, Safdar Jang marched out of Delhi (29th November 1749) only

* *Imād*, 45, *Muz.* 11, *Bayān* 251-255, *Siyar* iii. 29, *G-i-R.* 28-31, *Farrukhabad Gaz.* 158-171; *Budaun Gaz.* 235; *TAh.* 22a.

17 days after Qāim's death. In a few marches Koil (Aligarh) was reached, where he left the Emperor, and then pushed on with his own army to Dariyāganj (in the Eta district), 45 miles n.w. of Farrukhabad. By his order, his deputy in Oudh, Rajah Naval Rāi, advanced and occupied Khudaganj, 16 miles s.e. of Farrukhabad.

Qāim's mother opened negotiations with the wazir for saving the Bangash heritage for a price, and herself came to Safdar Jang's camp on 24th December. After long discussions, it was finally agreed that on payment of 60 *lakhs* of Rupees, as escheat to the imperial exchequer on account of Qāim Khan's property, all that chieftain's territory would be confirmed to Imām Khan, who would be recognised as the new Nawāb. Three-fourths of this succession-fee was paid in cash and kind, and for the balance the Dowager Begam threw the responsibility on Sadullah Khan Ruhela who had seized Qāim's elephants and camp property at Daunri and from whom the wazir must collect the amount as the price of these spoils.

Then Safdar Jang threw off the mask. He caused Bibi Sāhiba (Qāim's mother) to be kept in surveillance in his camp, while Naval Rāi advanced and occupied Farrukhabad itself. Bibi Sāhiba was left to enjoy the revenue of Farrukhabad city and twelve villages,—a gift to

the family from the Emperor Farrukhsiyar,—but the rest of Muhammad Khan Bangash's extensive domains was annexed to the wazir's territory and placed in charge of Naval Rāi, who made Qanauj his headquarters. Five of Qāim Khan's brothers were seized and sent to the wazir's fort of Allahabad as prisoners. His work done, Safdar Jang returned to Delhi (on 25th May 1750), bringing away under arrest five of the principal slaves and men of business of Qāim Khan.

§ 4. *Afghan popular rising against Safdar Jang; battle of Khudaganj.*

All Farrukhabad now lay prostrate at the wazir's feet. But his agents abused their power, and by their greed and insolence galled the spirit of the proud and martial Afghān race, so that in six months Safdar Jang's rule was swept off the country. Qāim's mother was kept in detention at Qanauj for realising the balance of the promised money. She escaped through the devotion of a hereditary clerk (*munshi*) of her husband's house, named Sāhib Rāi. This man gained a place in Naval Rāi's society and got his signature, when deep in his cups, on an order for her release. The time was midnight, but the order was immediately presented and the lady was conveyed by fast travel to her own people at Mau Rashidabad. Here she

set herself to rouse the Afghāns by sending her veil to the headmen of different villages and appealing to their sense of honour and love of liberty.

To the mass of the people, the wazir's rule was already intolerable, and the more so because its agents were the despised Hindus. A police underling of the new governor had an altercation with a woman vendor in the market of Mau, and after the usual exchange of abuse slapped her with his shoes. The aggrieved woman was the widow of an Afridi soldier; she appealed to Ahmad Bangash (a younger brother of Qāim), telling him that it would have been better if he had been born a woman as he was not fit to wear a man's turban when he could not protect his father's subjects from dishonour.*

The population of Farrukhabad was ready for an explosion; it only required a leader to supply the spark. Bibi Sāhiba wisely formed an alliance with her step-son Ahmad and he was accepted as

* It is added by the gossipy Sayyid Ghulām Ali that Ahmad Khan after hearing this reproach, in deep mortification at his own powerlessness, spent the next two nights in grieving and the days in fasting, and then girt up his loins for redressing the wrongs of his people. (*Imād*, 46.) Fall of Naval Rai.—*TAh.* 23*b*, 25*b*-26*a*, *Siyar* iii. 30-31, *D.C.* for dates. *G-i-R.* 35-37; *Chahār Gul.* 402*b*-403*a* (meagre), *Imād.* 45-48, *Bayān* 256-259. *Muz.* 44-45; *Far. Gaz.* 160-163; *S.P.D.* xxi. 32 (brief.)

the leader of the Afghān rising, though without money, arms or men. Rustam Khan Afridi raised Rs. 5,000 by selling his household goods and lent the money to Ahmad. With part of this sum four hundred men were secretly enlisted and armed. Then they committed a night robbery on a rich Hindu banker in a village 32 miles from Mau, killed him and his servants, and carried off his wealth, which enabled more Afghāns to be enlisted and fed. Eight days after this feat, Ahmad at the head of 6,000 men recovered Farrukhabad and set off southwards to expel Safdar Jang's men from the rest of his father's jāgir.

Naval Rai promptly advanced from Qanauj to meet the oncoming enemy and crush the rising before it could grow to full strength. He halted at Khudāganj, just north of the Kāli Nadi and 16 miles south of Farrukhabad, the Afghān camp being some two miles north of him. Naval Rai, a Sāksena Kāyastha, had risen by his ability in civil administration and management of men from a humble rank to the deputy governorship of Oudh and a position at the right hand of the wazir. He was fitted by his character and experience to be a revenue collector rather than the military governor of a district. Though not wanting in personal courage, he had no genius for soldiering nor training in the handling of armies. At Khudā-

ganj he received a letter from Safdar Jang telling him to avoid an engagement pending the arrival of reinforcements then on the way from Delhi. So he took due precautions, posted guards round his camp and his artillery in front, facing the enemy position, and warned his men to remain within their lines and not to fight unless attacked.

The news of reinforcements having started from Delhi for the Oudh army reached Ahmad Bangash through a friendly Rajah, and he lost not a day in striking his blow before the enemy's strength was doubled. In the dark and rainy night of 1st August, nine thousand Afghān infantry and 2,000 horse stole out of their camp, made a wide detour and attacked Naval Rai's camp from the rear* which was unprotected by artillery. The Sayyids of Barha, in charge of the defence here, at first repulsed the attack. "But by threatening suicide Ahmad Khan succeeded in rallying the fugitives, and led them to a second and more successful attempt. They made their way into the camp and threw it into the utmost confusion. The night was dark and rainy; and the artillerymen, not knowing where the enemy was, fired off their pieces without doing any execution. Meanwhile

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* The exact spot is said to have been the boundary of Kaitha and Gangui villages, about a mile west of Khudāganj (*Far. Gaz.* 162 *n.*)

Naval Rai, who was deep in his devotions, was forced with some difficulty to mount his elephant. The fighting went on in the confusion and darkness till the day broke. Naval Rai was shot dead soon after sunrise, and his elephant driver made off with his body across the river to Qanauj. The retreat then became general, and many of the fugitives were drowned in attempting to follow their chief's corpse. Qanauj was evacuated by the wazir's troops, and occupied by Ahmad Khan. An immense booty fell into the hands of the Pathāns." (*Far. Gaz.* 163.) The result was that "the beggarly and starving Afghans became very rich and owners of property and treasure." (*Bayān,* 259.) They crossed the Ganges and looted or occupied many places on its eastern bank or the Oudh side (*Imād,* 48.)

§ 5. *Safdar Jang's advance against the Afghans.*

While the Bangash leader showed such rapidity of decision and promptitude of execution, the wazir had been taking things in a lordly and leisurely fashion. He underrated the gravity of the danger and despised his enemies, particularly in the absence of any leader of repute on their side. As early as 6th July he had taken public leave of the Emperor at Delhi to go to Farrukhabad, but had thereafter halted for three

weeks in a garden outside the capital. The first division of his army, under Ismail Beg Khan and Rajah Devidat, began its march on 22nd July, while the wazir himself started on the 25th and moved slowly, doing two days' march in three or four days.

Arrived at Mārhara (in the Eta district, 13 miles north-west of Eta city), at the beginning of August, he heard of the disaster at Khudāganj. So a halt of one month was made here in order to call up more troops. The state of indiscipline in his army and the cleavage between the population and the soldiery who were to defend them are painfully illustrated by the sack of this loyal village in the wazir's presence. "A camel-driver in the service of a Mughal captain (*i.e.*, a Persian-Turk soldier of Safdar Jang) cut down a tree growing before the gate of Ināyet Khan, an officer of the wazir and an inhabitant of this place, who chastised him severely for it. That captain sent a party of men to seize Ināyet Khan. The other Mughalia troops, imagining that the wazir had ordered a

* *D.C.* records an intestine fight between Ismail Khan (the slave and most trusted counsellor of Safdar Jang) and Muhammad Ali Khan (a cavalry leader and high general of the wazir) in his camp on 18th December 1749. The English factors of Patna wrote in Dec. 1742, "The subah(dār) of Oudh is advancing this way with 40,000 horse . . . His people commit outrages, and are under no command."

general looting of the village, armed themselves, plundered the village in the evening, and levelled it to the dust. Ināyet and his young son were killed besides 58 other people of the village. The women of many Sayyids, Shaikhs, and Kambuh and other respectable men, as well as of the common people, were dragged away into slavery." (*Siyar*, iii. 32; *Khazin-Am.* 81.)

At last his musters fully made up, Safdar Jang resumed his march on 10th September, amidst the hardly suppressed curses of the people of Mārhara, and sighted the enemy, three days afterwards, near Rām Chatāuni, some 22 miles east of Mārhara and 18 miles north of Eta.* With him was a vast host of 70 to 80 thousand men, of the most miscellaneous description, mostly raw levies and under no sort of discipline. Nor were the different divisions of this army closely knit together by the watchful activity of one supreme master and the ready co-operation of the sub-commanders. Safdar Jang had not the royal gift of choosing able agents nor of knowing sound advice when given to him. He merely tried to

* Seven miles east of *Sahāwar* and five miles west of *Patiāli* [Irvine in *Far. Gaz.* 163.] *Patiāli*, which has given its name to the battle in some old histories, is 22m. n.e. of Eta, 27m. due east of *Marehra*, and 42m. n.w. of Farrukhabad. [*Ind. At.* 68.] I cannot find *Ram Chatauni* here, but two villages *Rampurah* and *Chaundahi*.

bind his soldiery to himself by lavish gifts of money at his caprice and winking at their plunder of the population, and not by sharing their toils like a comrade and frequently exercising them under his eyes, as Aurangzib used to do. Arrived now at the height of power, his overweening pride and excessive devotion to pleasure repelled honest and capable counsellors, and he became a mere puppet moved by one or two favourites, especially Ismail Khan, a former slave and now in effect his prime minister and chief manager of affairs. A few high-born nobles followed him loyally out of personal affection or because he was the supreme man of their faith (Shia-ism) in the imperial Government; but they had no effective forces under them and were not allowed to organise his military movements or regulate his administration. This disorderly rabble,—without any concerted plan of action, without any real head to control the tide of battle as it changed from hour to hour,—now flung itself on the smaller but more compact Afghān tribal levy, rightly self-confident from an unbroken series of victories and seasoned in manoeuvre and ambuscade in that terrain.

§ 6. *Safdar Jang defeated at Ram Chatauni.*

At three hours after sunrise, on the 13th of September 1750, the wazir's army advanced upon

the enemy in the usual formation. The four miles of ground separating the two camps were covered in about two hours and then followed an exchange of gunfire, in which Safdar Jang had a marked superiority of weight of metal. Next his right wing under Suraj Mal Jat and his left under Ismail Beg Khan attacked the Afghāns opposite them with vigour. The fighting here was long and obstinate; the Afghāns resisted to the utmost, and it was only after six thousand of them had fallen, including their commander Rustam Khan Afridi, that the two divisions gave way and were pursued for miles by Ismail Beg and Suraj Mal. Safdar Jang, ignorant or scornful of Afghān war tactics, very unwisely sent up cannon, swivels and rockets with more troops from his side to strengthen the pursuers, as if the entire enemy army had been defeated and it only remained to follow up the victory to the utmost.* The result was that his army became broken up into two parts, separated beyond call, while he the commander-in-chief stood in the field with only a small escort and no artillery around him, and half the Afghan army

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* Safdar Jang's defeat.—*Siyar* iii. 31-34, *TAh.* 26 *b*, *Bayān* 260-262, *Muz.* 46-49, *Chahār Gul*, 403*b*-406*b*, *Imād.* 49; Shākir 64, *Farrukhabad Gaz.* 163-164, *G-i-R.* 37-39, *Sujān Charitra*, iv *Jang.* (pp. 59-99). *S.P.D.* ii. 20 and 23 (very useful), xxi. 36. *Khazinah-i-Amira*, 81-83.

still unbroken and facing him. The battle had to be fought and won yet.

Ahmad Bangash, on the other hand, had coolly kept himself on the defensive, and was directing his followers' movements from the centre. When he learnt of the rout of his two wings and the fall of Rustam Khan, he concealed the fatal news and shouted out to his own division that Rustam had gained the victory and that the Bangashes must now exert themselves if they were not to be outdone by the Afridis. Thus heartened, his men renewed the battle.

The sun had now begun to decline from the meridian. It is the habit of India-born soldiers to slacken their efforts about one o'clock in the afternoon and seek refreshments and drink, especially if they have been under arms since the morning. A lassitude now fell on the wazir's army. The opportunity was not lost by the Afghans. They at once renewed the attack. Ahmad himself at the head of 6,000 fresh troops, mostly on foot, advancing under cover of a field of vetch, suddenly fell upon the wazir's vanguard. In the fight that followed Nasiruddin Haidar (son of the wazir's maternal uncle and one of his leading generals) fell. Kāmgār Khan Baluch, another high officer, who commanded a division close to

the vanguard, fled away, probably in collusion with the Bangashes.

Then the Persian contingent, which was the backbone of the wazir's army, lost heart, "their feet shook and they thought defeat certain." (*Siyar*, iii. 33.) The van fell into utter confusion and broke up into a disorderly mass of soldiers elephants and driverless carts, which obstructed the ground between the centre and the vanguard. The wazir ordered up reinforcements from the rear, but only three hundred horse, under Muhammad Ali Khan and Sayyid Nurul Hasan Bilgrami could force their way through the crowd to the fighting line. This handful of men could not restore confidence to their vanguard. A high wind with dust storm then arose and aggravated the confusion. (*G-i-R*, 38.) Numbers of the wazir's men began to leave the field.

The Oudh vanguard having been thus paralysed or dispersed, Ahmad Khan fought his way steadily towards the wazir in the centre. Then followed a period of confused struggle with the initiative entirely in the hands of the Afghāns and heavy odds against the wazir's remaining troops, who had now entirely denuded themselves of artillery. A compact body of Afghans, consisting of some 3000 infantry in front with a few horsemen behind them, advanced in a wedge-shaped

formation ("conical", *Siyar,* iii. 33) from the wazir's left side. When checked by Muhammad Ali Khan and his musketeers, they wheeled a little and turned towards the centre. Here the wazir was sitting on his elephant, with only a few staunch followers around him, while the field was covered with scattered groups of his fugitive soldiery. The Afghans fired a volley at the elephant-riders and then rushed upon the wazir's force sword in hand. Safdar Jang's *mahut* was shot dead, and he himself received a bullet in the neck and sank down into his brass-plated *hāuda* in a swoon. The driverless elephant wandered unrecognised by the Afghāns and thus the wazir's life was saved.

The Afghān victory was complete; the Oudh army was dissolved in utter rout. The victors gave chase for a short distance, and at this time Najmuddaulah Ishaq Khan II, the imperial *diwān* of Crownlands and an intimate kinsman and friend of the wazir, was killed fighting to the last. When surrounded by the enemy he had diverted their attention from the wazir by shouting out that he was Safdar Jang! The wazir's elephant was mounted by Jagat Nārāyan (the younger brother of Rajah Lachhmi Nārāyan) and led out of the field into safety.

With less than two hundred troopers, the wazir and Muhammad Ali Khan, both wounded, fell back on Marhara, 22 miles west of the field of battle, and next morning set out for Delhi with some appearance of order and formation among his followers. Much of his property was plundered by his own Mughal troops and the rest by the villagers around. When the victorious right wing of the Oudh army returned from their distant chase of Rustam Khan Afridi's division, they found the battle lost beyond hope of retrieval and their master nowhere to be seen. So, they retreated westwards.

To the Afghāns the victory had come just in time to give them breathing space at the end of a day of long uncertainty and strenuous exertion. One division of their force had been crushed with the loss of some 6000 men and the second-in-command of their entire army. The struggle had been so confused that the fulness of the wazir's defeat became manifest only after the sun had set, so that the victors could not at once reap the full fruits of their success. There was, therefore, no pursuit, but the wazir's standing camp was captured by the Afghāns after much of its contents had been looted by his own soldiers and the villagers in the course of that might.

§ 7. *Safdar Jang in disgrace at the imperial Court.*

But the cup of Safdar Jang's humiliation was full. For the first time in the history of the Mughal empire the grand wazir had been defeated in a pitched battle by an upstart jāgirdār's son and his rustic levies. His wound rapidly healed after being cauterized in the night following the battle; but he pursued his way to Delhi sunk in the deepest mortification.* At the first news of his defeat, which rumour had magnified into his death, his enemies at Court, headed by Jāvid Khan, the Queen-mother and Intizām-ud-daulah (the late wazir's son), raised their heads, and planned to attach his mansion and property. But they waited for a few days to verify the news. In the mean-time their evil designs leaked out, and Safdar Jang's wife, a clever and high spirited lady, put

* "The *mahut* took his elephant out of the battlefield and in one day arrived near Koil, about 40 *kos* away. Everything had been looted. That night the wazir slept on the ground, spreading the housing of his elephant as a bed and eating whatever could be had. Next day the fugitives assembled round him . . . On 22 Shawwal [should be 29th Sh.=20 Sep.] he entered his own mansion [in Delhi] without visiting the Emperor. For nearly two months he did not come to Court. Then, one day the Emperor, on a visit to a park, passed by the wazir's mansion and the wazir came out and interviewed him. The Emperor asked about his health and examined his wound, consoling him. When the wound was healed, the wazir came to Court, in shame and alarm." *TAh.* *26b-27a.*

her son and household on the guard, gathered troops within her mansion, shut the gates and stood ready to defy a siege. Then Safdar Jang arrived opposite Delhi (20th September) and was found to be neither dead nor without an army. He sent a warning to Jāvid Khan saying, "though dead, I am still stronger than any other living man." His enemies quailed before him and offered excuses for their past conduct.

But how was the vanquished wazir to show his face to his master? Tutored by Intizām-ud-daulah, the Emperor sent a message to Safdar Jang, forbidding him the Court on the ground that it was the rule of his dynasty that if a wazir fled from a battle field he must be dismissed for it and sent into retirement. To counteract this move, Safdar Jang promised a bribe of seventy *lakhs* of Rupees to Jāvid Khan, and that all-powerful eunuch turned the Emperor's wrath away and introduced the wazir again to the Court. [*Muz.* 49; *Siyar* iii. 36, *Bayān* 263, *Imād* 50.]

Safdar Jang now set himself to devise means of avenging his defeat on the Afghāns. For this purpose he could find no better instrument than the Marāthas and Jāts, and negotiations were opened for buying their aid in a new campaign in Rohilkhand.

§ 8. *Bangash invasion of the Lower Doab; siege of Allahabad.*

In the meantime, the battle of Rām Chatāuni had shaken the wazir's dominions to their foundations, as all the Doāb east of Delhi and the province of Oudh including the fort of Allahabad now lay defenceless. Ahmad Bangash followed up his victory by taking possession of the country from Aligarh to Akbarpur-Shāhpur in the Cawnpur district, and then returned to Farrukhabad, while he sent one army under his son Mahmud to invade Oudh and another under Shādil Khan to conquer the Doāb southwards to Allahabad. His governors occupied Phāphund, Shamsābād and Chhibrāmau. Shādil Khan's progress having been stopped by his defeat at the hands of the wazir's local agent Baqāullah Khan near Korā (Fathpur district), Ahmad himself marched with a vast army and laid siege to Allahabad. [*Far. Gaz.* 164-165.]

This redoubtable fort offered a long and gallant defence under Baqāullah Khan, who was joined by a strange ally, the Hindu warrior-abbot Rājendra-giri Gosāin with his ferocious followers called Nāgās,—utterly naked savages with ash-smeared bodies and long matted locks. This man refused to remove to the safety of the fort-walls, but continued to live in his hut below the fort,

close to the temple standing at the junction of the two rivers (Prayāg.) Twice or three times everyday, whenever he noticed any negligence or weak point among the besiegers, he would make a lightning raid into their camp at the head of his sixty followers sword in hand and mounted on swift ponies, madly slash at the Afghāns right and left, and as quickly return to his place. Baqāullah threw a bridge of boats across the Jamunā under shelter of the fort-guns and thus secured his supplies and communication with the country south of that river. From his head-quarters at Jhusi (opposite Allahabad), on the left or Oudh side of the Ganges, Ahmad Khan sent detachments eastwards towards Jaunpur, Azamgarh, and Benares. Rajah Prithipat Somvanshi of Partābgarh presented himself and joined the invader with his contingent. The chief bankers of Benāres waited on the Afghān general on the way and averted his visit to Benares by paying a large contribution (*Imād*, 50.) No part of the Benāres district was occupied by the invaders.

The Afghān force had neither the capacity nor the material necessary for taking such a fort as Allahabad. The siege dragged on for four months of desultory fighting, after which the Marātha threat to Farrukhabad led to its hasty abandonment (early in April 1751.) But before

leaving the place, Ahmad's soldiers, "all fearless and bloodthirsty Afghāns, looted the entire city of Allahabad, from the gate of Khuldābād to the foot of the fort, burnt it down, and dragged away 4,000 women of respectable families into slavery. They only spared the quarter (*dāira*) of Shaikh Afzal Allahabadi and the Dariyābād ward, whose inhabitants were all Afghāns". [*Siyar*, iii. 34; *Muz*. 53, *Imād*. 64, *S. P. D.* ii. 29.]

§ 9. *Bangash invasion of Oudh fails, 1751.*

The invasion of Oudh had been equally a failure. Mahmud Bangash (a son of Ahmad) with a vast force reached the western side of Bilgrām (32 miles s.-e. of Farrukhabad) on 1st February 1751. Here he encamped, while his men began to plunder that famous town. The inhabitants, many of them highly connected and soldiers by profession, offered fight; and a few people were wounded on both sides and about two hundred animals of the invading army were carried off. In anger Mahmud got his troops ready for assaulting the city, but was pacified by the holy men of the place, (evidently for a money consideration.) Thence he marched south-east towards Phāphāmau (opposite Allahabad and on the north bank of the Ganges), while one of his generals with 20,000 horse and foot was detached towards Lucknow.

The latter halted on the way and sent a body of 5,000 men onwards to occupy Lucknow (56m. s. e. of Bilgram), from which Safdar Jang's agents had fled away. The Afghān commander occupied the defenceless city and appointed his own police prefect to administer it. This man's oppression drove the citizens to desperation; they rose under the leadership of some Shaikhzādas, expelled him and restored Safdar Jang's authority. The Afghān advanced guard tried to enter the city and sack it in revenge, but it was opposed near the Ismailganj suburb (on the east side of Lucknow) and defeated. At the news of this unexpected reverse, both detachments of the invading army fled away to their chieftain. Their despair infected Mahmud and he beat a hurried retreat from Phāphāmau. All the magistrates and tax-collectors of the Bangash usurper were now expelled from Oudh. [*Siyar* iii. 35, *Imād* 50-51, *Muz*. 53-54.]

§ 10. *Safdar Jang with Marathas and Jats invades Rohilkhand.*

It only remained to punish him in his homeland. Some months after the disaster at Rām Chatāuni (13th Sep. 1750), Safdar Jang had re-established his position at the Delhi Court and completed his alliance with the Marātha generals,

who were the only power in India capable of crushing the Afghāns. He promised to pay Jayāppā Sindhia and Malhar Rao Holkar Rs. 25,000 (or 35,000) a day for their contingents and Surajmal Rs. 15,000 for his Jāt force for help in the projected invasion of Rohilkhand. Ammunition and rockets were collected and some guns received from the imperial arsenal through the good offices of Jāvid Khan. [*G.-i-R.* 40, *Siyar*, iii. 36.]

Winter is the natural time for campaigning in India, but the arrival of the Marātha allies was delayed till spring. They had first to fulfil their undertaking in Rajputana by seating Mādho Singh on the Jaipur throne and levy the promised subsidy from that State, and secondly they had to write to the Peshwā and get his consent to taking the Ruhela business in hand instead of immediately going to the South, as commanded by him, for a projected attempt to oust the Nizām from that part of India. (*S. P. D.* xxi. 40 and ii. 31.) It was only in the second week of February 1751 that the Marāthas could start from Jaipur. At last all his arrangements having been completed, Safdar Jang took formal leave of the Emperor on 11th February and entered his marching tents on the sandbank of Mahābat Khan. Thence he marched to Kishandās's Tank on the 18th, and

was joined two days later by his ally Malhar Rao. Surajmal also arrived with his Jāt force, and the plan of campaign was now formed.

The wazir remained some twenty miles in the rear of the fighting line and at a later stage of the war came back to his residence in Delhi. The brunt of the fighting was borne by his allies. First the Marātha light horse, 20,000 strong, made a dash and fell "like a sudden calamity" upon Shādil Khan, the Bangash governor of Koil (Aligarh) and Jālesar, who had only 4,000 horse and the same number of unreliable foot under him. Unable to oppose such odds, he fled away across the Kāli Nadi and the Ganges towards Farrukhabad. Many of his Afghāns were slain* or taken prisoner and much property seized by the victors (*c.* 20 March), and the whole of this large tract was cleared of the Bangash agents at one push. At the news of this disaster, Ahmad Khan at once raised the siege of Allahabad and returned to Farrukhabad with only a small remnant of his army, the mercenaries having disappeared during his retreat.*

* *Far Gaz.* 166; *S.P.D.* ii. 32. *S.P.D.* xxvi. 176: "Ahmad Bangash sent his vanguard to oppose Malhar and the Jāt who had entered the Doāb, but it was defeated, giving up 7 or 8 elephants and 4 to 5 thousand horses to plunder. Many Pathāns were slain,

He decided to abandon his capital and make a stand at a small fort, now called Fatehgarh, three miles east of Farrukhabad and overlooking the Ganges, near the ferry of Husainpur. Across the river was the Ruhela country, the only place from which armed aid and provisions could come to him. Here entrenchments were thrown up and the deep ravines on the land side supplied very strong natural defences.

The Marāthas had advanced rapidly down the Doāb, meeting with little or no opposition. They invested the Afghān position at Fatehgarh, "placing their headquarters at Qāsim Bāgh, half a mile west of the fort, while the wazir proceeded to Singirāmpur, a village and ferry some eleven miles further down the Ganges. As attempt made by him to throw a bridge across the river here was defeated by an officer of Mahmud Khan, who was encamped on the other side of the Ganges, opposite Fatehgarh. Meantime, at Fatehgarh the Marāthas daily besieged the fort. On the other side, the Pathāns made repeated sorties. Little impression was effected by either side. After the investment had lasted more than a month, Sadullah

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their camp was looted. Two or three posts have been captured. Great terror of the Marāthas has spread through that part." *S.P.D.* xxi. 41 and 43; ii. 14, 14*a*; xxvii. 66, xxvi. 175. *Khaz. Am.* 83-84.

Khan (son of Ali Muhammad Khan) approached with his Ruhela reinforcements of 12,000 men.

"On 17th April, a boat bridge was thrown over the Ganges by the wazir at Singirāmpur, and the Marathas and Jats crossed over to the left or eastern bank of it. Next day Sadullah arrived on that bank, opposite Fatehgarh and joined his forces to those of Mahmud Khan. Led away by youthful rashness, Sadullah attacked the Marāthas before Ahmad could cross over from the west bank and unite with him. After a great battle defeat fell in the end on the Afghāns. Sadullah and Mahmud fled away with their bare lives, the first to Aonla and the second to Fatehgarh, over ten thousand of their men were slain or wounded, and all their property, elephants, horses, carpets, clothing, was captured by the Marāthas.

"After nightfall the camp of the Ruhelas on the opposite bank was fired, and the sight of the flames struck terror into Ahmad Khan's garrison (in Fatehgarh.) . . . During the night the Nawāb (i.e., Ahmad Khan) with his kinsmen and chiefs left the fort, and made off to the ferry of Kāmraul, 15 miles above Fatehgarh, where he crossed the river and then took refuge in Aonla. The Marāthas overtook many of the fugitives at Shikārpur ghāt, four miles above Fatehgarh, and many were slain. In the morning (19th April),

the Marāthas occupied Fatehgarh, after having killed many of the remaining defenders and made a number of prisoners. The Ruhelas of Aonla . . . . identified themselves completely with Ahmad Bangash's cause. They all marched as rapidly as possible towards the Lower Himalayas," evacuating their homes of their women and leading persons.

The rainy season was about to begin, and the wazir, suspending the campaign till it should be over, went away to Lucknow. The Marathas cantoned in the Bangash territory, plundering the entire country to their heart's content. The value of the booty secured by them baffled the calculation of the historian Ghulām Husain,—"one single article being worth 16 *lakhs* of Rupees." Another historian, Sayyid Ghulām Ali writes, "In the invasion of the Ruhela country Malhar gained two *krores* of Rupees in cash, besides what he had plundered (in kind) in the cities." [*Siyar.* iii. 36, *Imād.* 57-59, *Far. Gaz.* 166-167, *TAh.* 27*b*-28*a*, *Muz.* 54-56, *G-i-R.* 40-41, *Sujān Charitra, Jang* iv.]

At the end of the rains, the Pathāns advanced towards Farrukhabad; the Marāthas retreated before them and crossed over to the western side of the Ganges. The wazir hurried back from Lucknow, crossed the Ganges, joined the Marāthas

and resumed the offensive. The Pathāns were repulsed and marched up the left bank of the Ganges, retreating to Aonla. After collecting the most valuable part of their property, the Ruhela and Bangash chiefs abandoned Aonla and sought shelter at the foot of the hills near Chilkiyā.

Here they formed an entrenchment in the forest, and fed with supplies furnished by the Rajah of Almorah they succeeded in holding their own for many months. All efforts to dislodge them from this inaccessible refuge failed. But the malignant jungle fever of this *Tarāi* region carried off thousands of Afghāns and Marāthas alike. (*Siyar*, iii. 37, *G-i-R*. 43.) Four months dragged on in this kind of desultory fighting till March 1752 came to an end, "The Marāthas were weary of a contest in which no plunder could be gained, and suffering from disease in a climate peculiarly unhealthy," they were eager to go back.*

§ 11. *Safdar Jang makes peace with the Ruhelas and Bangashes.*

At the news of Abdāli's invasion of the Panjāb (early in 1752), the Emperor pressed his

* Malhar Rao Holkar himself was deeply grateful to Ahmad Khan for his kind treatment and release of his beloved son Khande Rao, who had been captured in the jungle fighting one day. He plainly told the wazir that he would not fight Ahmad Khan to the bitter end. (*Bayān*, 265.)

wazir to make peace with the Afghāns of Rohilkhand and hasten back to the capital. So a peace was concluded at the beginning of April 1752, on the following terms:

"The debt due by Safdar Jang to the Marāthas for the expenses of the campaign was transferred to Ahmad Khan Bangash, who alienated to them half of his territory till the debt should be extinguished . . . The management of the Marātha parganas seems, however, to have been left in the hands of Ahmad, who, after paying the expenses of their administration, handed over the balance to two Deccani bankers stationed at Qanauj and Aliganj." (*Far. Gazetteer,* 167.) The author of *Siyar-ul-mutakhkharin* (iii. 37) gives further details, which are supported by *Bayān-i-waqāi* (266):—Farrukhabad and some other *mahals* worth 16 lakhs (or 22 *lakhs,* according to *Bayan*) of Rupees a year were left to Ahmad and other sons of Muhammad Khan Bangash, while the sons of Ali Muhammad Ruhela were confirmed in the possession of Mirābād and some other mahals which they had seized after the death of Qāim Khan, but they were subjected to the payment of revenue for these. Qanauj, Akbarpur Shāh and other possessions of the Bangash family were put in the possession of Govind Pant Bundelé the Marātha agent. Safdar

Jang kept a few of the places for himself. The Bangashes and Ruhelas thus emerged from this overwhelming invasion with surprisingly little permanent loss.

"Matters remained in this position till after the battle of Pānipat in January 1761." In that battle the Ruhelas and Bangashes rendered good service to the victor and rose to prominence in the Delhi Government in the chain of the new arrangements made by the Afghan king. "After their defeat at Pānipat the Marāthas withdrew from Northern India for some years. Ahmad Khan Bangash seized the opportunity to recover nearly all the territory of which he had been deprived" by the treaty of 1752. [*Far. Gaz.* 168, *Siyar.* iii. 37, *Bayān.* 265-266, *Imād.* 59, *Chahār Gul.* 407, *G-i-R.* 44-43 (terms not given.)]

CHAPTER X

THE PANJAB, 1748—1754.

§ 1. *Muin-ul-mulk subahdar of the Panjab; his enemies at home.*

When the Emperor Muhammad Shah learnt of the defeat of the Afghān invader and the death of his wazir Qamruddin at Mānupur (11th March, 1748), he appointed the wazir's son Muin-ul-mulk *subahdār* of Lāhor. This was quite natural, as the late wazir had held the subahdāri of Lāhor in addition to the Chancellorship of the Empire and Muin had greatly distinguished himself in the battle that ended in Abdali's defeat. Muin's orders were to chase the Afghān king out of India and recover possession of the Panjāb.

This was no easy task, as the civil war between Zakariyā Khan's sons for the governorship of Lāhor and the subsequent Afghān invasion had completely disintegrated the provincial administration, swept away the imperial authority, and introduced anarchy. After the battle of Mānupur, Prince Ahmad and Muin marched towards Lāhor, and arriving on the Satlaj near Ludhiāna halted for 22 days, at the end of which they heard that the Abdali had crossed the Indus

at Attock and gone away towards Qandahār, vacating the province. But at the same place came (9th Apr.) a letter of recall from the Emperor and the prince set out (12th April) with the imperial army for return to Delhi, sending Muin as *subahdār* to Lahor under orders of the Emperor. This step left Muin with no resources except his personal contingent,—the remnant that had survived the Afghān onslaught at Mānupur—to support him in controlling the unruly province of Lāhor. In the camp on the Satlaj he went to the tents of the old captains and comrades of his father and begged them to accompany him. But love of family and the attraction of the easy life of the capital prevailed over ambition and gratitude; they refused and returned to Delhi with the heir apparent.

Muin had no help but to start for his new seat of government with less than 2000 cavalry and a small number of other troops who were personally attached to him. In a few days he reached Lāhor and was welcomed outside it by the former officials and leading citizens of the place. He took up his residence in Fidāi Khan's mansion beyond the city walls and set about raising troops. The recruits were naturally men of his own race, namely Turks of Central Asia

(popularly called *Mughlai*),* many of whom were roving about in search of employment after the disruption of Nadir Shah's army. [Miskin. *TAh.* 10*b.*]

The new viceroy was an intelligent and just but lordly and easy-going ruler. He was confronted with enemies within the empire and outside it, but the former were the more formidable of the two. The new imperial wazir, Safdar Jang, was the malignant star in the Delhi firmament. Devoid of far-sighted statesmanship, patriotism or devotion to the throne, he was destined to ruin the Mughal Empire by pursuing a policy of blind self-aggrandisement. His one thought was how to ensure himself in the Delhi Government by raising around himself a ring of dependable clients at Court and in the provinces. The Persian party among the nobles, with Shia recruits of other races, was to be installed in office everywhere. Above all, the dynasty of Muhammad Amin Khan Ahrāri, which had held the wazirship

* Among these newly enlisted mercenaries were two captains (*jamadārs*) Sabātuddin and Nāzir Muhammad Beg, who gave to Muin, as presents on the day of their first audience, three Turki boys aged eight years, including Tahmāsp. This Tahmāsp lived to become a Delhi peer and to dictate (in 1780, under the pen-name of *Miskin*) a most valuable and original account of the occurrences in the Panjāb during the next ten years and in the Delhi Empire for a generation later (Br. Mus. Pers. 8807.)

for thirty years, ever since the fall of the Sayyid brothers, must be prevented from making that office its hereditary property with the support of other nobles of the Turki party, such as the Nizām. The late wazir's son, crowned with the laurels of Mānupur, would prove a formidable rival for the wazirate and the rallying centre of the Turki party, if he could firmly establish himself in the Panjāb and use that martial province as a recruiting ground for the best fighters in India, so as to make his claim to his father's office irresistible.

The first instrument of this malicious design was Nāsir Khan, ex-governor of Kābul, who was recently living in Delhi in unemployment and official neglect. On removing to Lāhor in search of bread, he was received very kindly by Muin who appointed him *faujdār* of the "four Mahals,"—Siālkot, Pasrur, Gujrat and Aurangabad,—gave him some money, and promised to support him in an attempt to recover Kābul from Abdāli after Nāsir had established his power and prestige in his new charge. The ungrateful wretch, after about a year of service, felt himself grown strong enough to turn against his benefactor. He listened to Safdar Jang's seductive messages urging him to increase his army, fight Muin, and wrest from his grasp the

subahdāri of Lāhor, which would then be formally conferred upon him by a letter patent from the Court through the wazir's influence! Nāsir by offers of higher pay seduced a thousand Uzbak horsemen of Muin to desert to his side. The plot now leaked out. Muin with great promptitude equipped a force, marched to Siālkot, and after a four hours' battle drove Nāsir Khan in utter rout to Delhi, "covered with public disgrace" (*c.* July 1749.) [Miskin 5-6, *Muz.* 9, 26, *TAh.* 24*b.*]

At the same time Safdar Jang had planted another thorn in the sides of Muin. He had found a useful tool for this purpose in Shahnawaz Khan (Hizbar Jang, the second son of Zakariya Khan), who, though a Turk by birth, had become a Shia like Safdar Jang and sought his patronage. The wazir told him, "The *subahdāri* of Lahor is your rightful heritage. Prepare yourself to win it by all means. Go to Multan, there increase your army, and expel Muin from Lāhor by force." The wazir sent Shahnawaz to Multan (*c.* May 1749), with an imperial letter of appointment as subahdar of that province and some money and equipment of his own. This noble, on arrival at Multan, began to increase his army by seducing Muin's soldiers with offers of higher pay, and in this way gathered 15,000 men, horse and foot, round his banners with some pieces of artillery.

Then he wrote to Muin asking for a passport to visit his father's tomb at Lahor! The trick was too transparent. Muin took prompt action. He sent an army under his Bakhshi Asmat Khan and his diwan Rajah Kuramal to Multan, where Shahnawaz was defeated, his army was dissolved, and Kuramal was installed as governor on behalf of Muin (*c.* Sep. or Oct. 1749.) [Miskin 7-8, *Muz.* 26, *TAh.* 25*a.*]

§ 2. *Abdali's second invasion; loss of the four mahals.*

Muin had not yet been long enough in the Panjab to establish himself fully in power and to gather adequate military strength. The two recent attempts to oust him had, no doubt, been foiled, but they had caused an immense loss of revenue to him and disturbed the country. In this state of weakness, before he could gain breathing time, it was his cruel fate to be called upon to meet a foreign invasion. It was only natural that when such intestine wars were raging in India's most important frontier province, and selfishness was totally blinding the highest officers of the realm, and greed of money was the sole guiding motive of her foreign mercenary defenders, the enemy beyond the mountain passes could not be asleep. India's internal condition was cheering

news to Ahmad Abdāli, and in the autumn of 1749 he set out to try his luck once more and to imitate the career of Mahmud of Ghazni on the Indian soil.

Muin collected his forces, advanced northwards to meet the enemy, and made his base at Sadra, 3 miles east of the modern Wazirabad on the Chenāb. From this place the Afghan position was several miles distant.* Scouts and foraging parties from the two sides daily rode into the intervening belt of land, fought skirmishes, and fell back on their own camps in the evening. This kind of desultory warfare continued for months, and the campaign could not be pressed to a decisive issue, as both sides were weak, Abdali's expedition being really intended to probe the defensive strength of the imperial frontier. But the scene of war was devastated and the continued strain and hardship began to tell upon Muin's

* Miskin's topography seems to be confused. He says that Abdali crossed the Chenab and boldly advanced [this must be eastwards, towards Lahor], and that Muin set out from Lahor and on reaching *that river* encamped at Sodra, whence the enemy was 15 *kos* distant [5 *kos* would be more correct.] Where, then was Abdali's camp, westwards beyond the Chenāb, or south-east of the Chenāb and therefore in Muin's rear [unlikely]? This writer (a boy of nine at that time) has evidently reversed the positions of the two armies, when writing from memory 30 years later. Abdali was at Sodra and Muin some 10 or 15 miles east of him and nearer to Lahor.

Mughalia troops. So, at last he made peace through the mediation of a holy man, Maulavi Abdullah (about February 1750.) Abdali was promised 14 *lakhs* of Rupees as the annual surplus revenue of the "four mahals"—Siālkot, Pasrur, Gujrāt and Aurangabad,—which Muhammad Shah had assigned to Nādir Shah by treaty. They were, no doubt, to be still governed by the Delhi Emperor's agents and in his name; but the Afghān, all the same, got the first slice of India proper. [*Siyar*, iii. 30; *Muz.* 27; *Bayan* 248-249; *TAh.* 8; Miskin 4.]

§ 3. *Sikh rebels and raiders, their character.*

For the next two years the Panjāb enjoyed peace from the side of Afghanistan; but its internal condition was no more tranquil or happy than before. The *subahdār* made frequent tours throughout his charge to suppress refractory local chieftains and predatory villagers. The Sikhs were already becoming a thorn in the sides of the established Government. The disintegration of imperial authority presented a golden opportunity to these born rebels. The martial religion of Guru Govind had knit the Sikhs together into organised bands of soldiers, with perfect brotherhood in their ranks and freedom from the distinctions of caste, social gradation, and

food which embarrass and divide the Hindus. They were mostly recruited from the sturdy race of Jat peasantry, hardy, strong-limbed, prolific "like ants and locusts," and accustomed to regard highway robbery as a hereditary and honourable profession. The Panjāb breeds excellent horses, for superior to the dwarfish mares ridden by the Marāthas. Each Sikh marauder was "well mounted and armed with a spear, sword and good matchlock," and they acted in bands under petty chieftains of their own, who had the wisdom to combine with others in the pursuit of the same trade. "The Sikh Uhlan's endurance and rapidity of movement were quite commensurate with his rapacity, enabling him to baffle, if not defy, superior numbers . . . . At a pinch, he could march some twenty or thirty miles a day on no better fare than a little parched gram washed down with pure cold water. A tent he despised, baggage in the ordinary sense of the word he had none . . . Besides his weapons, his whole kit consisted of horse-gear, a few of the simplest cooking utensils, and two blankets, one for himself, and another for his faithful steed . . . . Although his tactics mainly resolved themselves into a prolonged series of skirmishes conducted somewhat after the Parthian fashion, yet in the strife of men contending hand to hand, he was terrible, though

helpless against good artillery." [G. R. C. Williams in *Calcutta Review,* No. 119 (1875.)] In this last respect, as well as in the excellent size breed and fleetness of their horses and their universal use of fire arms, the Sikhs far surpassed the Marāthas as fighters.

The Sikh enemies of the Mughal empire fell into two classes regionally, each with a different history and line of action, namely, cis-Satlaj and trans-Satlaj,—i.e., those living south-east of the Satlaj, between Ludhiana and Karnal, and those whose homes lay north-west of that river, between Ludhiana and Lahor. The former in time developed into territorial magnates,—the Rajahs of Patiala, Kapurthala, Nabha and Jhind, besides smaller chiefs, by first passing through the stage of robbers of the imperial highway from Delhi to Lahor which ran through their homes. The latter were originally rebels defying the civil administration of the governor of Lahor, and supplementing their assertion of independence with the plunder of their weaker neighbours. In the second stage of Sikh expansion, *i.e.*, after 1761, the cis-Satlaj Sikhs became settled in principalities of their own, while the trans-Satlaj or Manjha Sikhs began to cross the river every year and usually without any co-operation from their local brethren, used to blackmail, rob or burn the villages and unwalled

cities of the entire country from Delhi to Mirat, Saharanpur and Hardwar. The third stage began with the new invasion of the cis-Satlaj region by Sikhs from beyond that river under Bedi Singh of Una in 1794 and Ranjit Singh in 1806. But these events would bring us to the British period of Indian history.

§ 4. *Revival of Sikh power after 1739; the course of its growth.*

The complete suppression of the false Guru Banda and his band of ferocious fanatics (1713) had effectually crushed the Sikhs as a rebellious and fighting force for one generation. Then the manifest impotence of the Delhi empire revealed by Nadir Shah's easy and complete triumph over it, tempted these people to raise their heads once more. While Zakariya Khan's strong and vigilant rule kept peace in the trans-Satlaj region (belonging to his *subah* of Lahor) up to his death (1745), the cis-Satlaj region, forming part of the *subah* of Delhi, began to see a revival of disorder and rapine. In 1740 a large body of Jats and Sikhs gathered together, chose a leader whom they styled Daranat Shah, and marched through the Sarhind district, causing a great disturbance and seizing many villages. It was only a force sent from Delhi under

Azimullah Khan that could defeat and disperse them. (*Chahar Gulzar*, 373 *a.*)

The unusually prolonged life and exceptional ability of Ala Singh Jat (in power from 1714 to 1765) enabled him to found the kingdom of Patiala in the Sarhind district on an enduring basis. His success was crowned at the close of his life when he was recognised as the lawful governor of Sarhind (in 1764.) During the intervening period he was the centre of nearly all the lawless risings in this region. The Rai family of Raikot (converted to Islam in the 13th century) were the leading landowners of this district, till they were eclipsed by the house of Patiala in the middle of the 18th century. They first shook off the authority of the Delhi Government about 1740 and, though defeated and driven out in 1741 by a combination of the imperial faujdar of Sarhind and Ala Singh, soon afterwards recovered their patrimony, gained Ludhiana in 1760, and extended their dominions by an amicable settlement of their respective spheres of influence with the Patiala Rajahs and other Sikh chiefs of the district. Ahmad Shah Abdali in 1767 confirmed Amar Singh, the grandson and successor of Ala, as governor of Sarhind with the title of Maharajah, and the whole of this tract up to Ambala city finally fell into the hands of the Sikhs (Phulkian and their Manjha allies),

each chief or confederacy (*misl*) seizing as many villages as they could. (*Ludhiana Gazetteer*, 22-24.)

This was the situation as developed by the course of events after 1761 in the cis-Satlaj region, which in the geography of Mughal India was not a part of the Panjab. We are, however, in this chapter concerned with the Sikh risings in the *subah* of Lahor, *i.e.*, in the region from Lahor eastwards to the Satlaj.

The political change which began in the Panjab after 1745, promoted a new upheaval of the Sikh element. Zakariya Khan had maintained public contentment and order by his strong and vigilant administration, his love of justice and regard for his subjects. His death, followed by the civil war between his sons and the Abdali invasion, ruined the government of the province and its finances. Muin-ul-mulk no doubt came in 1748 as substantive governor, but his forces were inadequate to bring the whole province back to order and restore the normal administration completely. He had to maintain a large force of freshly arrived recruits from Central Asia with lavish bounties. His household expenditure was also very heavy on account of his lordly and extravagant style of living, as we see vividly illustrated in the memoirs of his page Tahmasp Miskin.

"He could refuse nothing to his friends" (*Muz.* 81.) In consequence his income fell far short of his expenses, and the peasants were subjected to severe exaction and oppression. The Sikhs were known to hold it a religious duty to help one another of the faith to the utmost. So, wherever the villagers underwent oppression, they let their hair and bread grow, cried out *Akāl! Akāl!* and embraced the religion of Guru Govind. The other Sikhs came to their help, and thus their religion spread rapidly through the Panjab. As the peasantry were more and more ruined by their rulers, the number of Sikhs multiplied in proportion. This phenomenon became most manifest after Muin's death and during the incompetent and changeful regency of his widow Mughlāni Begam. [*Siyar,* iii. 51.]

§ 5. *Muin's struggles with the Sikhs.*

Even during Muin's lifetime small bands of Sikhs had been robbing the country and defying the Government in the region east of Lahor, especially in the Batala and Kalanur districts, and punitive expeditions had to be constantly sent out against them, sometimes under the governor in person. The Sikhs in that age were "helpless against artillery," and hence Muin very thoughtfully had 990 *jizails* made and employed them

against the Sikh brigands. His detachments "ran after these wretches (up to) 28 *kos*, and slew them whenever they stood up to a fight. Whosoever brought a Sikh's head to Muin received a reward of Rs. ten for each man slain. Any soldier who captured a Sikh's horse could keep it as his own. If his own horse perished in the campaign, another was given to him from the Government stables. (Miskin, 12.)

One expedition led against the Sikhs by Muin himself towards the close of 1752 is thus described by his page: "When the Nawāb Sāhib (i.e., Muin-ul-mulk) was out on an administrative tour, in the Batālā district, he heard that a large body of Sikhs were causing disturbances in that neighbourhood, stopping the roads and ruining the cultivators. He sent Sayyid Jamiluddin Khan with his *bakhshi* Ghāzi Beg Khan to punish them. These officers marched to the scene, fought the Sikhs and put them to flight. Nine hundred of the Sikh infantry threw themselves into the small fort of Rāmroti, close to Chak Guru Hargovind, which Jamiluddin immediately invested. After a few days the garrison rushed out sword in hand, fell upon the besiegers, and were all slain. (Miskin, 17.) But this slaughter had no more effect than stamping upon a few hundred white ants. Such conflicts with Sikh bands continued

till the very day of Muin's death (3rd November 1753)* and grew more numerous after him.

§ 6. *Abdali's third invasion; capture of Lahor.*

While the running sore of scattered Sikh risings was thus ceaselessly draining the lifeblood of the Panjāb Government, the province was again assailed by the Abdāli. The annual tribute for the "four mahals" promised by the treaty of 1750 had not been paid even in part. Abdali wrote to Muin from the frontier saying, "This breach of treaty has made me come. Send me 24 *lakhs* of Rupees for the three years past and then I shall go away." Muin replied that Nāsir Khan, who had administered the four mahals during the first two years, had run away with all the revenue collected during that time, and that he himself could pay the tribute for the only year that he had held that tract. The Abdali was not to be thus put off. In December 1751, he made his third invasion, with a much larger army than ever

* His page writes, "Wherever he heard of Sikh risings he sent Khwājah Mirzā with troops to suppress them. The Sikhs who were captured alive were sent to hell by being beaten with wooden mallets . . . At times Adina Beg sent 40 or 50 Sikh captives from the (Jālandar) Doāb district; they were killed with strokes of wooden hammers." (Miskin, 19.) Another fight with the Sikhs at which Miskin was present, during the *subahdari* of Muin's infant, is described in Miskin, 22-23.

before. When he arrived on the bank of the Indus, Muin sent him 9 *lakhs* as the revenue of the four mahals. Abdali took the money, but continued his invasion. Muin sent his entire family to the Jammu hills for safety. The richer citizens of Lāhor fled in alarm to Delhi and other places. [*TAh.* 30.]

From his capital Muin-ul-mulk hastily advanced to check the enemy on the way. Crossing the Rāvi he marched by way of Shāhdarā to the Bridge of Shāh Daulā, 22 miles north of Lāhor. Here he lay encamped in a strong position protected by numerous artillery, while the scouts on both sides daily engaged in skirmishes.

Then the veteran Afghan king made a daring move. Leaving his camp standing some distance in front of Muin's position, he with a picked light force made a wide detour to the right round the latter's camp, suddenly arrived in the environs of Lahor, and took post near the shrine of Shāh Balādil. Some houses in the suburbs, outside the walls, were plundered. The Afghān vanguard, reported to be 10,000 horse under their king's lieutenant Jahān Khan, occupied the Faiz Bakhsh garden.

Muin, finding his rear turned, hastened back towards Lahor. On reaching the bank of the Ravi at Rajghat, he halted and detached

Khwajah Mirza Khan with all his corps of 900 Mughalia troops armed with *jizails* across the river to dislodge the Afghans from the garden, which was effected after a long and stubborn fight.

Next day, the Afghans marched away towards the Shālamār gardens. Muin then crossed over to the Lahor side of the Ravi and formed an entrenchment outside the city. The war now entered on the stalemate stage. The Abdali could neither storm Lahor on account of his lack of artillery, nor drive Muin out of his trenches, and Muin too had not a sufficiently large mobile force to enable him to sally out and seek a decision with the Afghans in the open. The patrols on the two sides had frequent brushes. Ahmad every day sent out strong detachments which systematically ravaged the country for forty miles on each hand, so that "no lamp was lighted in any house for a distance of three marches and grain became exceedingly dear." (Miskin, 14.)

No reinforcement reached the defender of Lahor during these four critical months. The Emperor repeatedly wrote to his wazir about the urgency of the case and the dangerous condition of the frontier province, but Safdar Jang took no action, being more bent upon crushing his private foes and settling his own subah of Oudh. The

other nobles were too poor to afford any help. In Muin's own camp divided counsels reigned: Bihkāri Khan advocated peace at any price, Kuramal pressed for battle after distributing the proposed ransom among Muin's own soldiers and thus heartening them for the contest, while Adina Beg and Mumin Khan wavered between war and peace from day to day. [*TAh.* 32*o*.]

The war dragged on in this manner for a month and a half.* Then came a catastrophe. The Lahor army's long confinement within its trenches made the place foul and unhealthy, denuded the neighbourhood of grass and trees, and exhausted the wells. At last it was decided to shift the camp some ten miles to a better position with a plentiful supply of good water, grass and fuel. Next morning (5th March 1752), the march began at dawn. Adina Beg led the van, Diwan Kuramal the rear, and Muin himself the centre where all the baggage was placed loaded on

* According to *Husaini*, p. 31. But *Siyar* iii. 43, *Muz.* 57 and Miskin 16 say that Muin opposed the Abdali for four months; evidently that period covered the entire campaign from the stand at the Bridge of Shah Daula to the fall of Lahor.

Abdali's capture of Lahor.—*TAh.* 30*a*, 32; Miskin, 13-16. The other sources are later or secondary. *Siyar* iii. 43-44, *Muz.* 57-59, *Husaini* 31-34, *Elliot* viii. 167-168. *Lahore Gazetteer* (1883), 27, places the Abdali's camp near the Shālamār gardens, Muin's entrenchments "a short distance from the suburb of Shāhdara" and the last battle near the village of Mahmud Buti.

carts and transport beasts. But the news of the movement had leaked out, and as soon as this huge multitude of soldiers, camp followers and animals began its slow and ponderous march, it was assailed by the mobile Afghan horse in front and rear. The mounds of old brick vacated by Muin's artillery were immediately occupied by the enemy, who began to command the moving columns with their light swivel-guns, while their swift horsemen hovered around. "The order of the Lahor army fell into confusion."

Attacked vigorously in front and rear and threatened on both flanks, Muin sent 300 of his Mughalia *jizail*-men to support Adina Beg and the same number to Kuramal, while he kept Khwajah Mirza with the remaining 300 by his own side. Adina Beg is accused by some contemporary writers of having treacherously neglected to support Kuramal, so that cohesion among the three divisions of Muin's army was lost.* When Kuramal was hastening to his master's defence, a cannon-ball wounded his elephant. As he was changing it for another he was shot down by a bullet, and his troops dispersed in a panic. Thus

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* *Siyar.* (iii. 43), *Muz.* (58), Shakir (78), *Farhat-un-nāzirin* (in Elliot viii. 168.) The last charges Adina Beg with having shot Kuramal from behind.

Muin's rear was entirely uncovered and the exultant enemy attacked his division (the centre.) Here after a heroic resistance, two of his leading officers were wounded. But mercifully the shades of evening now closed on the field of terror confusion and death, and the remnant of the Indian army was saved. Some Afghans entered the city of Lahor pellmell with the fugitives and started plundering. In the thick darkness of that night, neither the citizens nor the soldiers could see anything distinctly, and so every one in his distraction sought safety by flight.

Meantime, Muin-ul-mulk had kept his place in the field and said his sunset prayer where he stood. All was not lost, as he still had some 10,000 men within call of him, but without any artillery or ammunition for the jizails. His captains took him with themselves to the Idgah, two miles from his position, in the hope of finding Adina Beg there, but that general had sought his own safety without thinking of his master. Muin had no help now but to grope his way in the darkness and enter the city of Lahor by one of its gates. He put up for the night in the mansion of Mir Amin Khan. Utter confusion raged in the capital of the Panjab during that dreadful night; none knew who else were in the city or who was where.

§ 7. *Muin surrenders to Abdali.*

With the return of daylight Muin promptly took such measures of defence as were possible under the circumstances; he posted his most trustworthy soldiers to man the walls and dug trenches where the fortifications were weak. Abdali invited him to a conference for settling a peace. Muin fearlessly went there with only three attendants, namely two sons of Jan Nisar Khan and a eunuch. Two of the highest Afghan nobles welcomed him and presented him to their king. Ahmad Shah asked, "What would you have done to me if you had captured me?" Muin replied, "I should have cut your head off and sent it to my master the Emperor." Abdali asked again, "Now that you have held off so long from making a submission, what should I do to you?" The vanquished governor fearlessly gave the answer, "If you are a shopkeeper sell me (for a ransom), if you are a butcher kill me, but if you are a Padishah then grant me your grace and pardon." The answer highly pleased the Afghan king. He embraced Muin, called him his son (Farzand Khān B.) and bestowed on him a robe of honour, an aigrette for the crest, and the very turban he was wearing. (Miskin, 16-17, *Husaini* 33.)

Then Muin begged that the favour shown to

him might be extended to his people. At his request the Abdali released his Panjabi captives, and posted his provost-marshals in the city to prevent his soldiers from robbing or maltreating the citizens. The people within the walls were already starving through the stoppage of their grain supply on account of the war and siege. Next day Muin returned to his quarters and raised a few lakhs of Rupeès from the city which he presented to the Abdali as the price of a dinner to him and his troops. By the terms of this treaty the *subahs* of Lahor and Multan were ceded to the Afghan king. He left them to be governed by Muin in the same way as before, without disturbing the administrative arrangements in any way. Only the surplus revenue was henceforth to be sent to the Abdali and the final orders in the highest questions were to be taken from him.* He even yielded to Muin's wise counsels and gave up his first thought of striking coins at Lahor in his own name (Miskin, 16.)

Similarly the *subah* of Multān passed into the possession of the Abdali and was placed under an

* To save the face of the Emperor, however, the letters of appointment of the governors of Lahor selected by the Abdali were to be issued from the Chancellery of the Delhi Emperor and these two subahs were to continue nominally as included within the empire!

agent obedient to him. Large numbers of Saddu-zāi Afghans (fellow-clansmen of Ahmad) were planted here with gifts of land, so that this province became an Afghan colony. (*Husaini,* 33.)

The victorious Afghan king halted at Lahor and sent his envoy Qalandar Beg to Delhi to secure confirmation of the gains of his sword. This man reached the Mughal capital on 1st April. The terrified Emperor and his ministers at once agreed to the formal cession of the provinces of Lahor and Multan to the Abdali, or in actual effect to pay him 50 lakhs of Rupees a year in lieu of their surplus revenue. On 13th April the Afghan envoy was given *conge* by the Emperor in the Hall of Select Audience and told, "I am standing firmly by my promises, but if your master deviates from his agreement I am prepared for fighting." The envoy placed the letter embodying the peace-terms on his head and assured the Delhi Court, "Whosoever is evil-minded towards this God-given State will be consumed by divine wrath." He and three of his companions received rich gifts and were sent away. [*D. C., S. P. D.*, xxi. 53,55; *TAh.* 33*b*.]

The only noble who could have opposed such a tame breaking up of the empire and counselled manly resistance was Safdar Jang. But he was far away to the east, entangled in war with the

Ruhelas at the foot of the Kumaun hills, and returned to Delhi on 25th April, too late to prevent the treaty. [*D. C., TAh.* 33*b*.]

§ 8. *Muin-ul-mulk's last year and death.*

After this signal success in arms, confirmed promptly by diplomacy, Ahmad Shah Abdali left for Qandahar at once at the approach of the Indian summer (April 1752.) Muin-ul-mulk turned again to his duties as subahdar and tried to restore the administration and public order which had been upset by the Afghan invasion. His most pressing task was to collect his dispersed fugitive and starving soldiery together. This done he went on a tour in the Batala district where he suppressed a Sikh band near Chak Guru Hargovind, slaying 900 of these desperadoes. At the end of this prolonged tour, he returned to Lahor and lived there for six months. But the Sikhs gave him no peace. The recent war had demonstrated to all the utter weakness of their governor and stripped the imperial Government of the last shred of prestige. With the coming of the cold weather (October 1753) their raids were renewed. Muin marched out of his capital to Malakpur, 40 miles north-east of Lahor and made a long halt there. From this base he sent out detachments to suppress the Sikhs wherever he heard of their risings. But

his efforts to stamp out the epidemic of lawlessness were futile.

On 2nd November 1753, after hunting in the forenoon, he took a heavy meal at midday, followed it by a *siesta*, and then in the afternoon while out galloping his horse over a field to join his troops, he was suddenly taken ill. The doctors could do nothing with all their devices, and he died in the night of the 3rd under symptoms which created the belief that he had been poisoned. His masterful widow, Mughlani Begam, "won over the soldiery by opening the doors of the treasury and paying the due salaries of the soldiers and officials for three days and nights." Then she brought his corpse to Lahor where it was buried in the tomb-enclosure of Miān Mir (Hazrat Ishān), close to the tomb of the late Nawāb Khan Bahādur.*

§ 9. *The governors of the Panjab after Muin.*

The news of Muin's death reached Delhi on 12th November. Next day the Emperor nominated his three year old son Mahmud Khan subahdār

* Miskin, 17, 20-21; *TAh.* 85*b* (death), 93*b* (burial.) "Muin was buried near Shāhid-ganj (north-east of the city), where the remains of his tomb may still be seen. In the reign of Sher Singh, the Sikhs dismantled the building, dug out the remains of Mir Mannu, and scattered them to the winds." (*Lahore Gaz.* 28*n*.)

of the Panjāb,—"that very important frontier province and one so constantly threatened by Abdāli", as the author of *Tārikh-i-Ahmad Shāhi* points out in justifiable indignation. The baby warden of the north-western marches made his bow for his exalted office in the *Diwān-i-khās*, and was quite fittingly supplied with a deputy (*nāib-subahdār*) in the person of Muin's son Muhammad Amin Khan, then in the second year of his life, for whom a robe of investiture was sent from Court with due gravity. This puppet play lasted for five days, and then on 17th November, Intizām-ud-daulah, the wazir, was appointed absentee governor of the Panjab. The actual administration was entrusted to Mumin Khan as his deputy, with whom Bihkāri Khan was joined. [*TAh.* 85*b*, 87*b*, 88*b*.]

But the reality of power lay elsewhere than at the imbecile Court of Delhi. The two deputies at Lahor wisely sent their agent to Jahān Khan, the Afghan viceroy of the Peshāwar province, in order to learn his master's pleasure in the matter. At the end of January 1754 a *farmān* and a robe of office were received from the Abdāli, by which Muhammad Amin Khan was appointed *his* subahdār of the Panjāb with his father's title of Muin-ul-mulk, while Mumin Khan was nominated as his deputy. This letter was welcomed with

regal honours and the State band played in rejoicing.*

The actual administration was to be conducted by Mir Mumin Khan, the highest noble of the city and the most trusted lieutenant of the former governor Zakariya Khan, as deputy subahdar. The other officers were reinstated in their respective posts. The Turki general Bihkāri Khān (surnamed Raushan-ud-daulah, Rustam Jang), who had been "the dearest friend and most trusted factotum of Muin" and the virtual ruler and "centre of all affairs in the province in his time", and had naturally aspired to the deputy governorship, was bitterly disappointed.

Stung to fury by baffled ambition, Bihkāri Khān wanted to seize the government of Lahor by force. He gave up attending the Court of the new *subahdār*, kept to his own mansion, began to collect troops, mostly the turbulent Afghans of Qasur, mounted guns on the terrace of his house, and displayed open hostility to the Begam's authority. But Mughlāni Begam cleverly bought

* *TAh.* 93*b*, 113*a*. After narrating this event, the author of *Tārikh-i-Ahmad Shāhi* remarks, "O the marvel! Such weakness on the part of a sovereign who wore the crown of the realm of Hindustan and whose coins were current throughout the land! All this was the outcome of the wickedness of the Irāni and Turāni nobles."

the support of the Mughlia captains with titles and increase of salary, and even seduced from Bihkari Khan's party Khawājah Mirza Khan (who had been Muin's right hand man in his campaigns), by giving him the pargana of Yaminābād. With this general's help, Bihkāri Khan was arrested and kept confined in the Begam's palace. His property was given up to plunder by order, and three days after his fall his troops made their submission to the Begam and were taken into her service. (Miskin, 22.)

§ 10. *Misgovernment of Mughlani Begam.*

Thus the threat of civil war in Lahor was ended and unity of command was seemingly restored to the government of the province. But the Panjab is not a country to be ruled by a woman acting for an infant in arms. If we can believe the evidence of the son of the man whom she murdered, the widow lost her character and indulged in foolish pranks. (Ghulām Ali's *Shah Alam-namah*, 26.) "Owing to the widow regent's simplicity each officer represented affairs to her in a different way. Eunuchs and slaves ruled the State. The peasants were ruined worse than before. The administration fell into disorder and decay. And the number of the Sikhs increased in consequence." (*Siyar*, iii. 51.) The infant *subahdar* died in May 1754,

displaying the same symptoms of poisoning as his father. And then nothing could prevent utter confusion from bursting upon the Panjab administration and ruin from overwhelming the life and property of the people.

The Court and chief men of Lahor called Muin-ul-mulk's son-in-law, Khwājah Musa Khan Ahrari,* to the vacant subahdarship, but all power lay in the hands of Mughlani Begam and was exercised by her eunuchs. Mir Mumin, the deputy governor, could do nothing. The government of the Panjab now visibly broke up; every one set up for himself, law and order disappeared from the realm, even the viceregal palace was looted. This brought first the Maratha and then the Afghan on the scene as the actual ruler, as we shall see later. [Miskin, 23; *Siyar,* iii. 51, *Muz*. 81.]

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* Muin's son-in-law is thus called in *Siyār* and *Muz*. (which, however, wrongly call Muin's son *Mir Mumin.*) Miskin calls the son-in-law *Mumin Khan,* the son of Khwājah Musa Kh. of Bukhārā, but distinguishes him from *Mir Mumin*, the old first noble of Lahor and long *deputy* governor of the province.

CHAPTER XI.

REBELLION OF SAFDAR JANG, 1753.

§ 1. *Character of Safdar Jang: his defects.*

It was only in a fit of extreme exasperation, when feeling himself opposed to a blind wall in all his acts, that Safdar Jang was tempted to remove his rival by means of the dagger. But if he hoped for a clear field for his administrative activities from this crime, he was soon to be undeceived. The immediate effect of the murder of Jāvid Khan is thus graphically described by the Court historian: "When the news reached the Emperor, he was greatly perplexed, but durst not do anything. Khwājah Tamkin, the wazir's agent, came to the fort with a large force, secured an audience with the Emperor through the *nāzir* Roz-āfzun Khan, and offered the wazir's excuses for this audacious act, reassuring His Majesty in every way and professing his readiness to carry out every order of the Emperor. . . . . The Emperor and his mother grieved deeply. It is said that Udham Bāi put on white robes and discarded her jewels and ornaments (like a widow.) But the Emperor said not a word to anybody on this subject." [*TAh.* 41.] The Queen-mother raged, though in secret, like a lioness robbed of her mate,

and fell completely into the hands of two far more formidable enemies of Safdar Jang than the late eunuch. Jāvid Khan was a lowborn upstart, despised by the nobility and the populace alike, and actuated solely by a vulgar greed of wealth which he sought to gratify by means of his plurality of offices and hold upon the Emperor. He had no administrative or territorial ambition; and indeed this kind of activity was impossible for a eunuch who had constantly to attend the harem at the capital. But Intizām-ud-daulah had the highest social position and family prestige among the Mughal peers, and Imād-ul-mulk possessed the greatest organising power, penetrating intellect and iron will of any man then living; and these two now became the leaders of the Court party.

Safdar Jang had not a single friend left to him in the Court circle. Salābat Khan was under confinement, Najmuddaulah was dead, and the two enemies who now had the Emperor's ears could not be mollified by money bribes as Jāvid Khan used to be. Nor could this defect of the wazir's position be made good by his own character. Safdar Jang was neither a good general nor a born leader of men. Personal valour he no doubt possessed, but it was nullified by his rashness and haughty disregard of the counsels of wiser men. He was incapable of forming far-sighted plans,

executing combined movements, promptly mastering the changing situation on a battle field, or retrieving a disaster by the force of iron determination and cool personal guidance.

He was of so lordly a disposition and so careless of money that he spent on the wedding of his son forty-six lakhs of Rupees, while the marriage of the eldest and favourite son of the most magnificent of the Mughal Emperors, a century earlier, had cost thirty lakhs only. [*Imād*, 36.] He was, no doubt, well served by Hindu secretaries and business managers who raised large revenues for him from his fertile province; but their efforts were neutralised by his extravagance. Nor had he the true leader's instinct of choosing capable servants and allowing himself to be guided by their counsel. Political foresight and diplomatic sagacity alike he lacked, and he could not build up any strong coalition, without which no one could maintain himself in power at the Court of such a fickle and faithless sovereign. In short, Safdar Jang had neither the sagacity nor the spirit necessary in a wazir called upon to maintain the Delhi empire of that age. A number of talented Shia officers gathered round him and remained devoted to him to the end; but they were mere individuals, attracted to him by the ties of religion or family, and not the successive links

in a complete and well-joined chain of administration. Thus, in the end, in spite of his splendid opportunities, the natural wealth of his provinces, and the excellence of his soldiers individually, his career ended in failure. The historian is bound to pronounce that Safdar Jang was far inferior in character and capacity to Ali Mardan and Sadullah, Mir Jumla and Ruhullah and other Persian immigrants who had adorned the reigns of Shah Jahan and Aurangzib, or even to Mirza Shafi Khan of the generation next to his.

Intizām-ud-daulah, Khān-i-Khānān,* the eldest son of Muhammad Shah's wazir Qamruddin, had inherited his father's ease-loving disposition. A timid unenterprising man, he always shrank from fight and sought safety by burying himself within his mansion, at the least threat of danger. He had neither natural capacity nor taste for a military life and could never handle even a small force in peace or war. As wazir of the Empire for 15 months (March 1753—May 1754), he covered himself with utter disgrace by his incapacity and cowardice. But his widowed mother Sholāpuri Begam (a daughter of Jān Nisār Khan of Aurangzib's reign), who had ruled her husband's

* His original name was Mir Nizamuddin Khan, and he subsequently got his father's titles of *Qamruddin* and *Itimadud-daulah,* but will be called *Intizam* throughout this book.

household, now established her influence over Udham Bāi and became the medium of the palace-plots for overthrowing Safdar Jang. [*Siyar*, iii. 46; *Imād*, 22.]

§ 2. *Character of Imād-ul-mulk.*

Imād-ul-mulk's father was Ghāziuddin Khan Firuz Jang, the eldest son of the Nizām Asaf Jah. An extremely reserved and godly man, Firuz Jang spent his days in the company of theologians and his nights in vigil, and ordered the life of his household with the strict rod of a puritan. These qualities he seems to have inherited from his mother, who was the Sayyid-born daughter of a pious Shaikh of Gulbarga. He married Zeb-un-nisa (popularly known as Sultan Begam), a daughter of the wazir Qamruddin. Their son was Shihābuddin, who afterwards gained the titles of Imād-ul-mulk, Ghāzi-ud-din Khan Bahādur, Firuz Jang, Mir Bakhshi, Amir-ul-umara, Nizām-ul-mulk Asaf Jāh, and finally in June 1754 became the wazir of the Empire. Born at Narwar in June 1737, Imad was brought up by his pious father with incredible strictness; he spent his days exclusively with tutors and *mullahs* and the Muslim Sabbath with eunuchs, being never allowed to mix with boys of his own age or to attend any performance by dancing girls, though this was the universal amusement of all classes in

that age and almost a matter of course at every social gathering. The result was that his intellect passed through a forced precocious flowering. He mastered several languages, including Turkish, and learned to write with neatness the seven different styles of Arabic penmanship. As a scholar, he was versed in many branches of knowledge and a poet of some note in his time. His intellectual attainments, however, did not weaken his power of action. Unlike his passive retiring father, he was brave in battle, enterprising in action, and a born leader of men in a degree surprising in a lad not yet out of his teens. But all these splendid gifts were vitiated by an utter lack of the moral sense, a boundless ambition, a shameless greed of money, and a ferocious cruelty of disposition that made him one of the monsters of Delhi history. His father's simplicity of life and aversion to pleasure had accumulated a vast hoard out of which seventy lakhs in cash and jewels were utilised by Imad most wisely and successfully in his war with Safdar Jang [*Imād*, 61-62; *Siyar*, iii. 46.]

§ 3. *Safdar Jang's administrative incapacity; causes of his downfall.*

For seven months after the murder of Jāvid Khan, Safdar Jang was the first minister of State

without a rival and without any rebellion or foreign invasion threatening the realm. If he had possessed any real capacity or statesmanly vision, he could have used this interval of peace to restore the administration and strengthen the national defence. But he did nothing to reorganise the army, cement alliances or improve the finances. Worst of all, by his lack of far-sighted policy, greed of money and office, and reckless pride, he frightened the Emperor, alienated the other nobles, and disgusted the people of Delhi.

He had employed his position as chancellor to take for himself the most fertile and easy *jāgirs* and the property of deceased nobles whenever the Government could venture to enforce the law of escheat. He had done this at first by going into shares with Jāvid Khan, but after that eunuch's death as a sole monopolist. All other nobles starved and laid their unemployment and hardships at his door, but they had to fret in silence for want of any friend or champion. Safdar Jang as wazir was officially in supreme control of the finances. He selfishly seized all the revenue that came in and spent it on his personal contingent, so that the troops of other officers of State and even the Emperor's palace-guard and artillery remained unpaid for years together, and the starving soldiery frequently rose in mutiny,

rioted in the streets, mobbed their officers, blocked the gates of the palace or of the Paymaster's house, preventing ingress and egress and cutting off their inmates' supply of food and drinking water for days together. Such was the visible fruit of this dictator's administration.

At the same time, while the wazir could not save his master from starvation or insult by his own troops, he was unable to defend the capital from outrage and plunder. The Marathas looted the environs of Delhi and even threatened to break into the city itself, and Safdar Jang could not remove them by force or bribery. In the district round Delhi, not to speak of distant provinces, highway robbery went on unchecked; the strong man collected the rents in the weak man's estate without fear. In a realm in the critical condition of Delhi at that time, the first minister of State frequently absented himself from the seat of the Government in order to look after his own interests in Oudh or Rohilkhand; the central administration naturally ceased to function and things drifted on without plan or aim.

By trying to grasp at everything Safdar Jang ultimately lost all. Moderation in the hour of victory would have perpetuated his power. In an age when every public office was regarded as an heirloom, and the son claimed his dead father's

post, not on the ground of his being the best candidate available but as the late incumbent's legal heir, Safdar Jang, himself a "new man", raised a host of enemies by trying to keep every office of power or emolument out of the hands of the Turāni chiefs and their followers. He forgot that the Turanis had been in supreme control of the administration for three generations, and they had built up a strong circle of subordinates, clients and dependent vassals. No true statesman cat afford to ignore the real elements of power (*realen macht-factoren*) in the world in which he moves; he must come to terms with them, in the spirit of living and letting live. But this Safdar Jang could not do; he had not a single friend among the older nobility now that Ishaq Khan was dead and Salābat Khan in disgrace. With insane folly he had alienated Alivardi Khan, the governor of Bengal and Bihar, though united to him by religion. His policy of restricting the admissions to the Emperor's audience in his own interests and his boisterous attitude to the other servants of State filled the Emperor with a sense of humiliation and fear about his personal safety. As the Court historian writes, "The monarchy was utterly ruined. The Emperor, seeing the wazir's love of disturbance, promotion of the mean, and villainy of spirit and his own helpless condition,

resigned all authority in the State to him and passed his days in pleasure in the harem. . . . This wazir was a desolator of the realm and an impoverisher of his master." [*TAh.* 44, 48*a.*]

The first task of a true wazir at that time should have been to reorganise the imperial army, which had been reduced in number, shorn of equipment and ruined in discipline. For this a regular and adequate supply of funds had to be ensured. But Safdar Jang looked only to building up his private hoard, regardless of his duty to the country. Therefore, the armed defence of the Empire became impossible and the wazir who had reduced the country to this condition had no right to hold his office.

A contest was sure to come for the overthrow of such a grasping dictatorial but futile wazir, and Safdar Jang's blindness precipitated it within seven months of Javid Khan's death. Short-sighted, with no fixed policy save selfish acquisition, Safdar Jang made every possible mistake. In the duel between the Irāni and Turāni immigrants in India, the adhesion of the local Afghāns would turn the scale, and yet he goaded the Afghāns into becoming his mortal enemies. They had been at the outset most reluctant to measure swords with him, as they dreaded an encounter with the wazir of the Empire; they only wanted to be let

alone. But thanks to his provocations and foolish conducting of campaigns, they soon learnt to despise his arms, while his base treatment of the dead Qāim Khan's family and the atrocities of his Maratha allies made the Afghān settlers both east and west of the Ganges loathe him for ever. The Marathas were mere mercenaries, ever ready to transfer their venal swords to the highest bidder, and Safdar Jang's depleted treasury could not compete with Imād's untouched hoard. His faithful Jat allies had been ineffective against the Ruhelas and failed to turn a single field in his favour in the civil war that now followed. On the contrary, their plunder of Delhi and its environs, —long remembered under the ominous name of *Jāt-gardi*,—brought the deepest odium on his side and alienated the people of the capital and its environs from him as the patron of these licensed brigands.* Even his brave and devoted partisan Rājendra-giri Gosain created bitter indignation in Muslim society by his impartial strictness in revenue collection in the district of Saharanpur,

* "Suraj Mal looted Old Delhi, whose population was equal to, or rather a little bigger than, that of Shah Jahan's city; the life property and family-honour (*i.e.*, women) of the people were destroyed, and no one could escape from the Jat plunderers even by taking refuge in a holy man's house." *Siyar*, iii. 48. The reference is to Safdar Jang's spiritual guide (*pir*) Khwajah Md. Bāsit. [*Bayān*, 279.]

where he humbled "the leading landholders of the place,—Sayyids of Barha, Afghans and Gujars, who had never obeyed any *faujdar* before,"—selling their women and children into bondage (which was the customary punishment of debtors and revenue-defaulters), while his Muslim predecessors had probably been equally harsh but had spared Sayyids and Shaikhs. [*TAh.* 44, 121*a.*]

Safdar Jang's main reliance was on his Turkish soldiers, styled in Indian history as *Mughlia* and *Kula-posh* ("hat men" from their red Turkish caps), because the native Persians of Aryan stock and Shia faith made very poor soldiers. But these men were united to him solely by the cash nexus, and the higher bid in pay and honours made by Imād with the Emperor's authority easily induced them to desert to that side; their natural sympathies,—if any warmed their venal bosoms, were with Imād-ul-mulk and Intizām, both Turks by race and recognised leaders of the Central Asian settlers in India.

§ 4. *Imad-ul-mulk appointed Mir Bakhshi.*

But the greatest blunder of Safdar Jang was the promotion of young Imād-ul-mulk to the highest power and dignity, in ignorance of human character. When the first report of Ghāzi-ud-din's

death reached Delhi (on 29th October, 1752), his family feared that the needy Emperor, at Intizām's instigation, would seize the treasure stored in his Delhi mansion. His young son Shihābuddin, coached by his tutor Aqibat Mahmud Kashmiri, at once went to Safdar Jang's house and from nine o'clock of that night till the noon of next day sat down there weeping and crying out in utter misery; he would listen to no consolation, nor consent to eat or drink anything. To Safdar Jang's words of sympathy he replied (as taught by Aqibat), "You are my father, and as the late Ghāziuddin was a brother to you, I have really lost my paternal uncle. You are my only defender and patron now." His persistence wore Safdar Jang out and at last the wazir vowed that the orphan would in future find a father in him. He made Shihāb-ud-din exchange turbans (in sign of full brotherhood) with his son and heir Shuja-ud-daulah, took him inside his harem, where his wife unveiled herself before Shihāb like a mother to her son, and finally he promised that he would use all his influence with the Emperor to secure the orphan's succession to his father's property, estates and even office. Then only could the youth be induced to break his fast.

When the days of mourning for Ghāziuddin were over, Safdar Jang took Shihābuddin to Court

and persuaded the reluctant Emperor to appoint him Mir Bakhshi (Paymaster-General of the Empire) with the titles of Ghāzi-ud-din Khān Bahadur, Firuz Jang, Amir-ul-umārā, Imād-ul-mulk (12 Dec. 1752) and later Nizām-ul-mulk, Asaf Jāh. Thus a boy of 15, absolutely untrained in war, who had come straight out of the hands of theological tutors and eunuchs, became the executive head of the army of an empire threatened by Afghāns on the west and Marāthas on the south. Ahmad Shah of Delhi and the people of the empire, no less than Safdar Jang, lived to rue this choice. Safdar Jang at first rejoiced that he had brought under his banner the second natural leader of the Turāni party and bound him for ever to his own side by the tie of gratitude, and thus set up the most effective check on Intizām-ud-daulah. But he was destined to be undeceived in a few months and to know that this smooth-spoken helplessly clinging lad was the deadliest viper that he ever nursed in his bosom; two successive Emperors of Delhi were put to death by him and the heir to the throne could find safety from him only in exile.

§ 5. *Safdar Jang's domineering conduct after the murder of Jāvid.*

Safdar Jang's grasping spirit knew neither shame nor moderation and soon set everybody

except his personal retainers against him. Though the aggrieved officers and dispossessed nobles durst not say anything against him at the noontide of his power, they at once rallied in open hostility to him as soon as a centre of opposition was opened by a great noble with the Emperor's support, and his fall was swift. We shall now trace the steps by which this result was brought about.

Safdar Jang, in addition to snatching away the wazir-ship which the Turānis regarded as their hereditary property, had done them an unfriendly turn at the beginning of his office. He had secured to himself the transfer of the Sarhind district from the hands of Intizām-ud-daulah who had hitherto held it as second *bakhshi* in assignment for the salary of the 5,000 Turkish soldiers of the Emperor. The entire Turāni race murmured at this loss, the soldiers of their blood starved, and though there was no open breach at that time, the seed of discord was sown so early. [*TAh.* 15*b.*] In June 1752 he had bullied the Emperor into transferring to him all the *jāgir* lands throughout the provinces of Oudh and Allahabad, with the result that the numerous petty officers to whom the rents of these estates had been hitherto assigned were now deprived of their livelihood by one stroke of the pen. [37*b.*] Next, he caused the *faujdari* of Saharanpur, worth Rs. 6,000 a

month, to be taken away from the Emperor's maternal uncle's son and given to his follower Rājendra-giri. Similarly, the Emperor was forced to yield to the wazir all the Crownlands in Etawa and Kora as well as in Safdar's two *subahs*. [38*a*.]

Jāvid Khan was killed in the evening of 27th August, 1752. Safdar Jang, after removing his sole rival, took prompt measures to establish his domination. Jāvid Khān's property was escheated and his estate-manager and personal valet were confined to make them disgorge his treasures. [*TAh*. 41*b*.] On the fourth day after the murder, the wazir nominated his retainer Abu Turāb Khān *qiladār* and police-superintendent of the palace-fort in order to gain a strangle-hold on the Emperor in the inmost recess of his abode, and poor Ahmad Shah durst not object to it but gave the man his investiture of office. But even so Safdar Jang's mind was not composed; he suspected that the Queen-mother would secretly correspond with his enemies. He therefore kept his own watch at the entrance and exit of the imperial harem and sent eight women agents to stay in the ladies' quarter of the palace and read all letters that were sent out of it. But this was more than the Queen-mother, who ruled the palace, could bear; she angrily turned these spies out and Safdar Jang

shrank from a contest with her. He sulked in his mansion in the city, refusing to attend Court unless his mind was reassured. The Emperor had to yield; on 23rd September he paid a visit with his mother to the wazir's house and brought him back to the palace,—for the first time after Jāvid Khan's death. The unhappy king of kings had to stoop still lower. On 28th September he pledged his word to Safdar Jang not to make any appointment without his consent. A wholesale transfer of posts now took place; Safdar Jang's creatures displaced the old incumbents in numerous minor offices. On that day the wazir's youthful son Shuja-ud-daulah was given charge of four important departments around the Emperor's person, namely, the *āhadis*, confirmation of appointments and grants, mace-bearers, and personal riding establishment; and finally on 1st January 1753 he was made superintendent of Private Audience, with full control over the *entree* to the Emperor's Court such as Jāvid Khan had exercised in his time. [*TAh.* 41*a*—43*a*, *D. C.*]

§ 6. *Safdar Jang offends Emperor and the nobility.*

With a creature of his own in military command of the palace, Safdar Jang began to restrict admissions to the Emperor's presence as

he pleased. "The new *qiladār* used to stand at the gate of the fort and Kishan Narayan (the son of the wazir's agent Rajah Lachhmi Narayan) at the gate of the Private Audience Hall and control the business of entree, so that no *mansabdār* whose duty it was to mount guard inside the fort, —except the horse and foot of the artillery department then under the wazir's son and the necessary eunuchs footmen and office-clerks of the palace, could come within the fort. Further, the wazir issued an order that no soldier should enter the fort on horseback or with arms on, and this rule struck at the escort of the nobles. They therefore, feeling insulted and alarmed, gave up their visits to the Emperor. On Friday, 14th September, Ahmad Shah rode out to offer his public prayers in the wooden mosque within the fort (enshrining the Prophet's relies removed from the *Jam'a masjid*), but no grandee joined his *cortege* and even the officers marked for guard duty that day were absent. He asked, "Is it that the *qiladār* does not admit them, or that the *wazir* has forbidden their entrance?" The *qiladār* gave the evasive reply, "I admit every one who comes. If none will come what can I do?" [*TAh.* 41*b*-42*a*.] *Darbārs* were announced for 16th and 17th September, but no noble other than Safdar Jang's partisans attended, and when the Emperor

sent for the chief absentees they begged to be excused on the plea of illness; Intizām was said to have been taking China wood for three months, and held back from the Court even after the other absentees had been induced to attend. [42*b*, 43*a*.]

The Emperor keenly resented being reduced to the condition of a captive cut off from free intercourse with society by Safdar Jang's partisans. Such high handedness on the part of the prime minister could have been borne if his administration had been a success, the revenue secured, and the enemy kept out. But a dictator under whom the capital was insulted by a permanent camp of Marathas at its gates, the provinces passed out of the Central Government's control and the royal household officials and troops all starved, was sure to provoke a universal revolt against his unwholesome domination.

On 22nd October 1752 a Maratha force, some 3500 in number, encamped at Talkatora, four miles south-west of Delhi, and another body of 4,000 horse came to the Kālkā hillock on 6th February 1753. The lawful *faujdār* of Sarhind was driven out by another man, but the Delhi Government took no action against the usurper. The salary of the Emperor's household servants was nearly two years in arrears, but after a month spent in discussion the Treasury could pay their

dues for four months only, as the coming of revenue from the Crownlands had been stopped by usurpation and disorder. The Court annalist laments, "From this the condition of the troops and of the nobility can be guessed. None save the wazir had a sufficiency of soldiers. How then could enemies be defeated and the country brought under control? The empire was totally ruined . . . The wazir took away what he liked from the Crownlands, so that not a pice reached the Emperor's treasury. This wazir was an impoverisher of his master." [*TAh.* 43*b*-44*b*, 47*a*.]

In November came reports of Abdali's preparations for a fresh invasion of the Panjab and all people from Lahor to Delhi were alarmed. The wazir proposed that the Emperor should march in person to defend the frontier. The Emperor very properly replied that there was no soldier or war-equipment under him, but he was prepared to go *alone* if the wazir thought it any good! He continued, "You are the sole centre of the Government now; all the realm and its income are in your hands. Try to collect money for paying the troops and making preparations for my march." The wazir was silenced by this speech. But a month later the anxiety from this quarter was deepened. On 8th December the wazir reported that news had repeatedly come of

Abdali's marching towards Lāhor and that it was necessary for the Emperor to set out to oppose him, the 16th of the month being an auspicious day for starting. The Emperor, on hearing this, grew thoughtful and in the evening after taking counsel with his mother answered, "The condition of the troops and the country is evident to you. Try to find money anywhere you can." To this the wazir could give no reply. [*TAh.* 45.]

The danger came still nearer. On 5th February 1753, an envoy from the Afghan king arrived at Delhi with a letter from his master and escorted by 2,000 horse. Abdāli was halting on the frontier at Attock and demanded 50 *lakhs* of Rupees as tribute for the present year, otherwise he would advance in force upon Delhi. The envoy was received in audience on the 13th. The Emperor asked him to wait eight days for a reply and held a council. All his nobles told him, "The Marathas have undertaken to fight Abdāli. You have given them the two provinces of Agra and Ajmir, and the *chauth* of all the 24 *subahs*. You have paid them money and placed all authority in their hands. Ask *them* what should be done now." The wazir assured his master that the Maratha force at Delhi would be augmented to 10,000 in a fortnight and with his own contingent of 30,000 men, would constitute an army 40,000

strong for fighting the Pathan king. While thus preparing for hostilities, the wazir detained the envoy under various pretexts, and then (22nd March) sent him away when the internal quarrel of the Delhi Court was about to burst into a civil war. [*S. P. D.*, xxi. 53, 54, 55; *D. C.*; *TAh.* 46*b*. 49*a*.]

§ 7. *Court conspiracy against Safdar Jang.*

The general discontent with Safdar Jang's rule favoured the Queen-mother's plan for overthrowing him. This plot was secretly matured and at last carried out in March 1753. She had hitherto been the motive force of the Government on the side of the Emperor. "Every business was transacted by her. Causing Khwājah Tamkin, Rajah Lachhmi Narayan, Rajah Nāgar Mal (the diwān of Crownlands) and other high officers to sit down before her audience chamber, she used to discuss affairs with them from behind a screen. All petitions of demand (*mutālib*) from every part of the empire and closed envelopes that were sent to the harem were read out to her and her orders were issued on them, which had to be carried out." [*TAh.* 45*b*.] This position of supreme authority made her the centre and spring of the coalition against the wazir. Intizām was the avowed enemy of Safdar Jang and openly kept away from the

Court in fear of the wazir, while Safdar Jang always avoided passing by Intizām's mansion lest he should be shot at from within. "The friction between the two daily increased. The Emperor outwardly sided with Safdar Jang and humoured him, but secretly won Intizām over." Imād, though a lad of 15 only, was the deepest of the plotters and averted all suspicion by professing to follow Safdar Jang while his heart was set on overthrowing him.

For liberating the Emperor from Safdar Jang's bondage, the first necessary step was to clear the palace of the wazir's officers and to surround the sovereign's person with loyal troops and nobles antagonistic to the wazir. Events quite naturally worked to this end. The treacherous murder of Jāvid Khan had given to the nobles whose high rank and independence might raise them to rivalry with the wazir, a reasonable ground for refusing to attend Court unless they could enter the fort with strong body guards,—which Safdar Jang had forbidden. All lesser nobles outside the wazir's party had been impoverished by dismissal from their posts and loss of income from their jāgirs and therefore could not appear in public in becoming equipment. Thus, the Courts now held by Ahmad Shah were attended only by the agents and underlings of Safdar Jang. The

grandeur and concourse of the Delhi darbār was gone. The Emperor keenly resented this falling off in splendour, and the higher society of Delhi and the general public were behind him in his desire to end Safdar Jang's usurped control over the Crown. All things being ready, the Emperor secretly looked out for a partisan of his own to replace Shujā-ud-daulah as Chief of Artillery and ex-officio commander of the palace defences. Noble after noble shrank from accepting a post which would be a challenge to the all-powerful wazir, but in the end a willing instrument was found. Then the blow was struck, and in the following way.

§ 8. *Safdar Jang's men expelled from Delhi fort.*

From the beginning of March 1753 Delhi was shaken by frequent rumours of an impending clash between the wazir and Intizām, the Emperor discreetly pretending to be a peace-maker between the two and an open supporter of Safdar Jang. Great confusion and alarm reigned in the city almost every day. On the 13th of that month, the wazir sent his eunuch Tamkin at midnight to the Emperor to say, "I have heard that Intizām wants to make a night attack upon me. I too have got my troops ready." The Emperor sent two slaves of his own to Intizām, who denied

having made any hostile preparations or even wishing for such a thing, but the reply did not pacify Safdar Jang. Next morning, when the news of the incident became public, the bazars were filled with tumult and clamour, the traders removed their goods from their shops to places of greater safety; every one collected in his house what armed guards he could hire; the Marathas assembled before the mansion of Intizām. In the belief that the riot might overflow into the palace, the men of the artillery and the mansabdars of the imperial body guard and retinue (*khās-chauki* and *jilau-i-khās*) flocked into the fort for its defence, and thus there was a large gathering of soldiers around the Emperor. In the course of the next three days, the two rivals, in obedience to the Emperor's repeated orders, withdrew their troops from the city, and that particular tumult ceased.

The Emperor now felt himself not so helpless as before. On 17th March he called Shuja-ud-daulah's deputy as Chief of Artillery and censured him, "The qiladār prevents my servants from coming within. It has even been reported to me that the wazir's men enter the fort, sit down in the ante-room (of the Hall of Select Audience) and pass whomsoever they like. What do you call this?" The deputy Mir Atish could only offer

excuses and became filled with despair. The officers of the artillery department, taking their cue, gave up going to him for their orders.

That very night, about 9 p.m., a clamour rose in the fort that the wazir was coming to enter it with a large force. At this rumour all the mansabdars and imperial servants took up arms and stood in defence of their ruler. The Emperor ordered the artillery captains to go outside the fort and take post before it. Abu Turāb Khan, the *qiladar,* fled from the fort in great agitation to the wazir. The alarm was entirely false, but it had done its work; Safdar Jang's agent had been peacefully expelled from the palace. A great tumult raged in the city throughout that night, and of king, wazir, soldiers, citizens and palace servants not one man could sleep. The guns on the fort walls were loaded and trained on Safdar Jang's house (the former mansion of Dara Shukoh) which they commanded.

With the morning the truth became known and the tumult and alarm ceased. Safdar Jang had been cleverly outmanœuvred; without a blow being struck he had been deprived of the command of the palace, and soon his miscalculation was to make him lose control of the capital too. On the 18th, the Emperor tried to console the wazir by presenting him with his own turban (a mark of

full brotherhood.) Safdar Jang believed that he could still coerce his master. In reply he wrote to say, "As your Majesty's heart has been turned away from me, order me to go away to any place you like. Out of my cash and effects, pay the dues of my soldiers and escheat the remainder. Confer my wazir-ship and other posts on such other men as your Majesty may please." The Emperor took him at his word, and immediately wrote to him in his own hand, permitting him to retire to his subah of Oudh, but leaving his offices and property untouched. On the 23rd, the customary robes and presents of the ceremony of giving *conge* were sent to Safdar Jang by the Emperor and his mother, and he sent his advance-tents out of the city to the first halting place, Nurābād, but delayed starting on the plea of lack of porters.

At last, finding his position no way improved, Safdar Jang set out from his mansion within the city of Delhi on 26th March. As he came opposite the palace, he dismounted from his elephant, turned his face to the imperial abode, and made a low *salām* to his invisible master. There was a drizzle at the time, and as he looked up drops of rain fell into his eyes and mingled with his tears. It was really the end of his wazir-ship, though he knew it not. The Emperor was

now restored to the nobility of the empire and his subjects regained their access to him free from restriction. The old imperial darbar was now revived after six months' eclipse during Safdar Jang's usurped dictatorship, and every noble and officer in Delhi flocked to it.*

§ 9. *Stages in the war between Emperor and Safdar Jang,* 1753.

The civil war between Safdar Jang, which may well be said to have commenced on 26th

* *TAh.* 47*b*-49*a*; *Siyar* iii. 46; *Muz.*, 69; *Ch. Gul.* 408*b*; Shākir 72. I have followed *TAh.* only. The following account is given in a letter written to the Peshwa from Delhi on 28 March 1753 by Antaji Mankeshwar :—"The Kh-kh, the Mir Bakhshi, and [the late] Kh. Duran's son (*i.e.*, Samsām) have conspired for a month to bring the wazir to the fort for a private consultation and there despatch him and then give the wazir-ship to Kh-Kh. Bāpu Rāo Hingané showed me the Emperor's letter ordering 5,000 Maratha horse to be mustered and counted in his presence. So, I got ready and went [to the fort.] Kh. Kh. and the other two also came there armed and ready. The Emperor sent a letter to the wazir asking him to come quickly for an urgent business. But his step-mother Malika-uz-zamāni secretly sent out of the palace a letter to the wazir informing him of the treachery and bidding him not to come. Then the wazir got 25,000 of his troops and artillery ready and came [to the fort gate] saying that he would settle accounts with the man who had played this trick, imprison Ahmad Shah, and set up another Emperor. A great tumult raged in the city. The Emperor repeatedly sent messages to the Maratha envoy, saying, "All my hope is in you. I am Bālāji Rao's man. Save my life.'" [*Aiti. Patr.* ii. 86.] This is supported by *TAh.* and generally by *Bayān* 275.

March 1753, and ended with Safdar Jang's return defeated towards Oudh on the 7th November following, falls into three clearly marked stages: The first six weeks (26th March—8 May) passed without any hostile action, as both sides were equally unwilling to precipitate a clash of arms, Safdar Jang roving aimlessly round the city, unable to make up his mind whether he should peacefully depart or rise against his king and master, and his rivals at Court setting about to enlist troops and buy Marātha and Afghān allies. This stage was terminated by the arrival of Suraj Mal and Salābat Khan in the wazir's camp (on 1st and 4th May respectively) and their inducing him to take up an openly aggressive policy, of which the first outcome was the plunder of Old Delhi by the Jāts (9th May.) In the second stage (9th May—4 June), there was declared war between the two sides, and Safdar Jang seemed to be on the point of triumphing, while his opponents were cooped up helplessly within the walled city. But with the arrival of the Ruhelas under Najib Khan to the Emperor's aid (2nd June) the tide turned, the first evidence of which was the failure of Safdar Jang's grand assault on Delhi on 5th June. The third stage (5th June—7th November) went steadily but decisively against Safdar Jang, and was heralded by the Court party's advance

out of the walled city and their occupation of Old Delhi. Gradually, in spite of almost daily skirmishes and internal troubles with mutinous soldiery, the imperialists pushed the rebels further and further back, till at last the country for 22 miles south of Delhi, as far as Ballamgarh, was wrested by the Emperor's men, and finally on 7th November Safdar Jang accepted defeat and set his face towards his own subah, leaving all his political ambitions behind.

§ 10. *Why the contest turned against Safdar Jang.*

In the first stage of inaction and waiting on events, every day that passed told against Safdar Jang and in favour of his enemies. At the outset, the force under him was over-whelming, his enemies unorganised divided and friendless. But that disadvantage was rapidly remedied by Imād's tireless industry, power of knitting men together, and genius for grasping at every opportunity as it came up; and this six weeks' respite enabled his hired Maratha and Ruhela allies to reach Delhi, while it ate up Safdar Jang's treasures in inaction. Safdar Jang did not at first realise the value of the advantage which the possession of the Emperor and the capital gave his enemies. After the dismissal of Safdar Jang

from the wazir-ship (13th May), no order in the Emperor's name could be issued by him; he was manifestly a rebel and a traitor to his master. The fountain of honour and the source of legality had been left behind him in Delhi, in the hands of Intizām, the new wazir. So, every Rājput chief who hankered for a high title or elevation above his peers, every captain of mercenaries who wished to be promoted to the rank of a landed baron, every Marātha general eager to secure the legal surrender of imperial territory or the grant of *chauth* in return for his sword, looked up solely to the Emperor cooped up within the walls of Delhi. And within those walls were also the hostages unwittingly given by Safdar Jang to his rivals. For, thanks to the Jāt depredations and Marātha raids of the last few years, no man of wealth, no man who valued the honour of his women, ventured to live in the country; they all lodged within the city of Delhi. And most of Safdar Jang's chief partisans and officers naturally took houses in the capital when he was wazir. In addition even the common soldiers of the Turkish race (popularly called *Mughlia*) who were the backbone of Safdar's army, had left their families and household goods in the quarter of Delhi called Mughal-pura, which had been colonised by their race ever since the days of the

Khilji Sultans at the end of the 13th century. After Safdar Jang had once gone into open rebellion, he could not protect them from pillage and outrage by the Emperor's party unless he made himself master of the capital, which was an impossible feat for him. This fact made his ultimate defeat so complete and so ruinous to his partisans.

§ 11. *Interval of hesitation; Emperor's defence organised.*

Safdar Jang had issued from Delhi on 26th March, but was in no haste to go to his own province. He lingered in the environs, pleading lack of transport, but really in the expectation that the Emperor would come down on his knees, as he had done so often before, and recall him to the Court armed with supreme authority. He could not at first imagine,—and hardly anybody else imagined—that armed opposition to him was possible. So, from his camp in the suburbs he held daily parleys with the Emperor and sent challenges to his rivals who lay safely sheltered within the walls of the capital. Safdar Jang was unwilling to raise his hand against his royal master; the fate of the Sayyid brothers was before him. [*Bayān,* 277; *TAh.* 50*b*-51*a; Ch. Gul.* 408*b; Muz.* 69; *Siyar,* iii. 46.]

After the *coup d'etat* of 17th March, by which the Emperor recovered control of his palace-fort, though Safdar Jang continued as wazir, his agents Khwājah Tamkin and Rajah Lachhmi Narayan were no longer admitted to the presence for reporting his proposals and taking the Emperor's orders as before, but they were detained outside and all business between the Emperor and the wazir was conducted through Hakim Alavi Khan II, who was physician to both. Ahmad Shah pressed Safdar Jang to go to his *subah* immediately, but the wazir begged for time on the plea that he required a vast number of porters and carts to remove his entire family and property from Delhi. The Emperor sent fifty covered waggons (*raths*) from his stores for Safdar Jang's women, but still the latter delayed. Then he began to increase his army and called up his fighting lieutenant Rājendra-giri from Saharanpur to his side.

But he lost Imād-ul-mulk. This youngman had hitherto professed to be a *protege* and follower of Safdar Jang and had been sent by the wazir on the day of the first alarm (17th March) as his envoy to Intizām's house to negotiate for a compromise with that chief. Imād spent a day and a night there as Intizām's guest, outwardly discussing terms but secretly making a pact with him for

concerted action in the coming war against the wazir. [*TAh.* 48*b*, *Muz.* 66, *Imad.* 63.] Three weeks after Safdar Jang's issuing from Delhi, Imād threw off the mask, and began to actively organise the forces of the Court party. The Queen-mother gave him two *krores* from her own treasury, which was supplemented by 70 *lakhs* from his father's hoards, for levying troops. He summoned the Maratha envoy Bāpu Mahādev Hingané and told him to concentrate the Maratha soldiers from different places at Delhi, so that there was soon a force of 4,000 there under Antaji Mankeshwar. His agent, Mahbub Rām, was sent to call Malhar Holkar from Aurangabad, but this man was intercepted by Suraj Mal on the way. The two sides began to bid against each other for Maratha support. In return for Bāpu Rāo's promise to bring 5,000 Deccani horse and place them under the Emperor's orders, he was given two *farmāns* granting the *subahdāri* of Allahabad and Oudh to the Peshwa on condition of his defeating the *wazir*. Against this, Safdar Jang offered jāgirs yielding ten lakhs of Rupees a year and appealed to his old association with Malhar Holkar in the Doab campaigns, but in vain. With unerring instinct Bāpu Rāo backed the Emperor, because the one constant aim of the Peshwa was to secure as subahdar of Mughal Deccan a noble

who would be subservient to him, so that the Marāthas would be *de facto* rulers of the South. For his active exertions in assembling Maratha troops in Delhi and posting them in force to guard the gates of the city, against a surprise by Safdar Jang, Hinganê was created a 6-*hazāri* (11th April.)* Intizām attended the Court on 14th April, for the first time after the murder of Jāvid Khan.

§ 12. *How Safdar Jang began the war.*

Safdar Jang had been roving aimlessly in the suburbs of Delhi, passing from the north by the west to the south of the city. Neither party at first deemed it wise to force a clash of arms, and hence they carried on negotiations for a settlement, while using the respite to raise fresh troops for the contest that they knew to be inevitable. One contemporary [*Bayān*, 277] says that Safdar Jang shrank from assaulting the city at the outset when his military superiority was at its height and his enemies unprepared, because he wished to spare the citizens all the horrors of a sack, and

* Antaji Mankeshwar, the jealous rival of Hinganê, had been made a 4-*hazari* through Shujā-ud-daulah on 17 Jan, 1753 (*D.C.*), but he now went over to the Turanis, and was presented to the Emperor on 19th April, and promoted in rank. *TAh.* 50*b*; *Aiti. Patr.* ii 86.

was confident that the mere terror of his arms would compel the Court party to sue for peace. But every day that passed in inaction only lessened the difference in strength between the two parties and exhausted his finances. The feeding of Safdar Jang's vast army and horde of camp followers soon became a serious problem, which could end only in disorder and conflict. On 22nd April he ordered Rājendra-giri to go to the eastern side of the Jamuna and bring in provisions from the villages there (all of which belonged to the Crownlands or the estates of nobles), by any means he could, which meant plunder. This act of violence stopped the grain supply of Delhi and sharply raised food-prices in the capital. The Emperor wrote to protest, but the wazir refused to recall his men and replied, "My enemies are Intizām and Imād, and my business is with *them.* They have turned the Emperor against me. Tell them to come out and fight me." He gave a similar message (29th April) to Imād's chief officer, Aqibat Mahmud, abusing the Turāni leaders and challenging them to "come forth and fight if they were men." To the Emperor he sent the reply, "I shall slay the Turānis in any way I can." [*TAh.* 51*b*.]

The attempt was made the next day, 30th April. About two hours after dawn as Intizām

and Imād were coming to the Court in *pālkis,* two horsemen fired their muskets at them in front of the fort-gate, but missed both, one bullet merely grazing the stomach of Aqibat Mahmud who was just behind his master. The miscreants dashed into the Jamuna and took the road to the wazir's camp, but one of them was captured and slain. Imād began to engage troops, saying, "There is open enmity between the wazir and me, and I ought to fight." [*TAh.* 52*a.*] That day Salābat Khan (Sādat Kh. Zulfiqār Jang), the late Mir Bakhshi, living in disgrace and confinement in his house since his dismissal in June 1751, was coaxed by two ex-queens to visit the Court and was restored to the Emperor's favour.

§ 13. *Salābat Khan joins Safdar Jang and incites him to rebellion.*

Events moved apace with the commencement of May. On the first of that month, Suraj Mal, now free from the bloody capture of Ghasera fort (belonging to Bahadur Singh Bar-gujar) on 23rd April, came to the wazir's camp at his pressing call with 15,000 horse and advised a vigorous offensive. Three days later, Salābat Khan, when out on a pretended pilgrimage to Shāh Mardān's shrine with his family, was collusively seized by a detachment from Safdar Jang's army and taken

to the wazir's camp, where he was cordially welcomed and installed as the chief adviser and most honoured friend of Safdar Jang. Salābat, with a heart sore against his ungrateful young master and his new counsellors who despised the elder peers, taunted Safdar Jang with cowardice for having been turned out of power by "boys", when he had a splendid army that could have easily crushed the Court minions and re-established his own supremacy in Delhi. To Safdar's profession of loyalty and readiness to obey his master, Salābat replied, "What you say would be true if the Emperor were his own master and acted according to his own judgment. But he is constantly sunk in wine and pleasure, and has degraded the elder peers by giving authority to youthful upstarts. You ought to make an attempt to reform the administration, so that we may not be insulted by boys." [*Ch. Gul.* 409*a*; *TAh.* 52*b*; *Muz.* 71.]

So next day (5th May) the wazir despatched Rājendra-giri towards Barapula and Ismail Khan towards the village of Nagli (near the Jamuna), for attacking the mansions of the Turānis situated there. This outbreak of hostility caused great alarm and stir in the city; the Emperor wrote to a very near relative of the wazir to induce him to desist, but Safdar Jang haughtily replied,

"Peace can be made only if the Mir Bakhshi-ship, the second Bakhshi-giri, and the subahdari of Lahor and Multan are taken away from the Turānis and given to my nominees. Imād and Intizām are to be banished from the Emperor's side. Or else, know for certain that to-morrow I shall attack their houses, and the imperial fort too is near and within my view." [*TAh.* 53*a.*]

An open rupture could no longer be averted. On 8th May the Emperor dismissed Shujā from the command of the imperial Artillery and gave that post to Samsāmuddaulah (son of that Khan-i-Daurān who had fallen in the battle with Nādir Shah), and ordered the defensive entrenchments on the river strand to be pushed to completion. These were now armed with guns of all calibres from the fort arsenal, under the Emperor's own eyes. All the other offices held by Shujā, including the important ones of superintendence of the Private Audience and paymastership of the *ahadis*, were given to other men; and the *qiladari* of the palace was formally transferred from Safdar Jang's agent (Abu Turāb Kh.) to Ahmad Anga.

§ 14. *Jats plunder Old Delhi.*

The wazir shrank from a fight, but instigated Suraj Mal and Rājendra-giri to plunder Old Delhi, especially the grain-market and houses outside the

Red Gate of Shah Jahan's new city. This quarter contained no noble's or richman's mansion, but only the homes of middle class and poor men. These were plundered and their families maltreated, through the thoughtless tyranny of Safdar Jang, who gained no military advantage or increase of strength by this outrage. All who could left their houses in the Old City and flocked within the walls of New Delhi for refuge. Next day (10th May) the Jats spread their devastation in other suburbs, like Sayyidwara, Bijal masjid, Tārkāganj, and Abdullahnagar (near Jaisinghpura), ruining the humbler people but drawing back where the inhabitants combined and offered resistance or where a few soldiers were present to hearten and guide them. "The Jats plundered up to the gate of the city, lakhs and lakhs were looted, the houses were demolished, and all the suburbs (*puras*) and Churania and Wakilpura were rendered totally lampless."* These ravages

* *TAh.* 55*b*; *Bayān* 278, *Ch. Gul.* 410*a*, Shakir 74. "Suraj Mal looted Old Delhi, the population of which was equal to or even a little larger than that of Shahjahanabad; and the life, property and female honour of the people were destroyed. Even a holyman's house proved no safe refuge from Jat rapacity." (*Siyar*, iii. 47-48.) "Many citizens, on being unable to seek safety by flight, killed themselves in despair." (*Muz.* 71.) *Bayān* 278 says that the Qizilbashes of the wazir's army joined in the plundering. Suraj Mal's court eulogist grows more than usually prolix (14 pages) in describing this looting; *Sujan Ch.* vi. *Jang.*

were long afterwards remembered by the Delhi populace under the name of *Jāt-gardi,* on a par with the raids of the Marathas and the Afghans. [*Imād.* 63.]

That evening, about three hours before sunset, the imperialists made a sortie from their trenches, attacked the advanced lines of the wazir's army which were held by Rājendra-giri and routed them by superior artillery fire; then they advanced their own trenches to the ferry of Lutf Ali. The Maratha contingent of 4,000 under Antaji Mankeshwar, though not yet taken into regular pay by the Emperor, distinguished itself in this first battle.

The Jats every day plundered the city of Old Delhi. Only those places were saved where the imperial detachments could arrive in time or which lay within the range of the imperial artillery. "All the people of Old Delhi and other suburbs fled to the New City with whatever property they could carry off; and the inhabitants of the New City, too, in fear of plunder, carried their valuables on their persons. They roamed from house to house, lane to lane, in despair and bewilderment, like a wrecked ship tossing on the waves; every one was running about like a lunatic, distracted, puzzled and unable to take care of himself." [*Ch. Gul.* 410*b*.] All the bazārs, lanes and houses were

crammed with refugees. The Emperor very considerately ordered the Sāhibābād garden (in Chandni Chauk), the "Garden of Thirty Thousand", and other gardens and houses belonging to his Government to be vacated and given up to the people who liked to live in them. Vast crowds of people high and low went there. Shopkeepers and artisans set up booths in them and engaged in their trades. [*TAh.* 54*b*.]

§ 15. *Emperor dismisses Safdar Jang and declares war against him.*

There could be no compromise with the man who had caused such universal and wanton misery. So, the Emperor dismissed Safdar Jang and appointed Intizām *wazir* in his place, with the titles of Qamruddin Kh. Bahadur and Itimad-ud-daulah (13th May), while Imād-ul-mulk, the Paymaster General, was invested with his grandfather's titles of Nizam-ul-mulk and Asaf Jāh. To this blow Safdar Jang replied by enthroning a lad of unknown birth, popularly believed to be a handsome young eunuch recently purchased by Shuja-ud-daulah, as Pādishāh under the name of Akbar Adil Shah, declaring him the grandson of Kām Bakhsh, and making himself his wazir and Salābat Kh. his Mir Bakhshi! [*TAh.* 54*b*, *Ch. Gul.* 409*b*, *Bayān*, 276; *Sujān Ch. Jang* vi.]

The contest had now reached a point where the two sides had at last drawn their swords and thrown the scabbards away. The Emperor sent off letters to all sides calling upon the zamindars, feudatory princes, Ruhelas and even noted Jat Mewati and Gujar robber-chieftains to gather round him against the rebel ex-wazir and the pretender to the throne. Imād and his manager Aqibat Mahmud organised the imperial defence. But two things contributed most to the success of the Emperor, namely the seduction of Safdar Jang's Mughlia troops and the proclamation of a holy war (*jihad*) against Safdar Jang as a disloyal heretic (*nimak-harām rāfizi.*) Imād worked upon Sunni fanaticism by issuing a decree signed by some theologians which denounced the ex-wazir as a Shia heretic, and called upon all true Muslims who honoured the first three Khalifs (cursed by the Shias) to join in a holy war against this heretic leader. The green banner of the Prophet was unfurled, and the public enthusiasm was roused to the boiling point in favour of the war. This propaganda was vigorously worked by the Panjabis and the Kashmiris, the latter of whom had performed several bloody massacres of the Shias of their province in the reigns of Shah Jahan and Aurangzib, and even as recently as 1724. Most of the Ruhelas hitherto in Safdar Jang's

pay hated him for being a Shia and readily rose to humble their political and spiritual foe at the passionate appeal of Najib Khan; and the rest left for their homes and stood neutral in this contest between faith and loyalty. [*Siyar* iii. 47, *Muz.* 73, *Imād,* 60.]

Imād was a Turk himself and his grandfather the first Nizām and Intizām's father Qamruddin (Muhammad Shah's wazir) had been for a generation the recognised leaders of the Mughlias in India. Imād now proclaimed in public that every Turkish soldier deserting Safdar's army would be given a bounty of Rs. 50 and advance pay for one month (Rs. 50), their captains would be rewarded with gifts of horses, elephants, money, robes and jewels. In addition to these temptations, the Mughlia soldiery of Safdar Jang were coerced into coming over to the imperial side by the threat of their homes in the Mughalpura quarter being sacked and their women outraged by order of Imād. Thus, in a short time, 23,000 soldiers, Turāni and Hindustani, deserted Safdar Jang's camp and came into the city and were enrolled in the *sin-dāgh* brigade, which was popularly called *Badakhshi.* The imperial side received a further accession of strength from the coming of the Ruhelas, 15,000 horse and foot under Najib Khan, and 2,000 Hindustanis under Jetā Singh Gujar,

who had audience on 2nd June. This completely turned the scale against Safdar Jang and enabled the imperialists to undertake a bold and irresistible offensive.*

But the shrewdest blow which Imād struck at Safdar Jang was the confiscation of his adherents' houses in the city. The imperial artillery from its larger calibre and the high position of the city walls commanded Safdar Jang's lines on the plain outside and forced him to keep at a safe distance from the walls. [Shākir 74.] Mirza Ali Khan (the third Bakhshi) and Salār Jang were brothers of Shuja-ud-daulah's wife, though they served on

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* *Siyar* iii. 47, *TAh.* 56*a*, Shākir 74, *Imād* 63, *Bayān* 277. Originally the Qizilbāsh or Turki troops of Sādat Khan, governor of Oudh (d. 1739) were called *Sin-dāgh*, because their horses were branded with *sin*, the first letter of the word *Sādat*.

"Imād, inspite of his youth, being then only 17 or 18 years of age, exerted himself to the utmost in collecting troops, spent on them the vast treasures hoarded by his father and grandfather, and distributed the horses of his own stable and his artillery among them. The Queen-mother, though a dancing-girl by origin, surpassed the begams and Shāhzadas of pure breed in this work. She used to issue orders about the movements of the troops from within the *jharoka* window; she sat behind a screen in the chapel close to the *Diwān-i-khās*, holding discussions with the nobles, and spent on the army her own treasures and the gold and silver vessels in the imperial stores inside and outside the harem. Hence, the Emperor's strength increased, and despair seized Safdar Jang." *TAh.* 56*a* & *b*.

the Emperor's side in this civil war. Their mansion overlooked one part of the imperial trenches. Imād alleged that in the night preceding 17th May cannon-balls and rockets had fallen from the direction of this house on the trenches below. The Emperor, without holding any investigation, ordered the house to be plundered and the two brothers to be confined in charge of his harem superintendent. [*TAh.* 55*b*, *Ch. Gul.* 411*a*.] "Thus a multitude of people were ruined, because many men knowing that these two were Shuja's brothers-in-law on the one hand and the Emperor's followers on the other, considered it safest to lodge their women and property in this mansion. These suffered indiscriminately in the general sack." [*Bayān* 279.] But this was only the beginning. The Emperor and his ministers were too needy to be just. The houses of every known follower of Safdar Jang, of every Persian by birth, and of many innocent men who were merely suspected of being Safdar Jang's partisans, but whose only crime was their wealth, were plundered by the imperialists, at first under orders and latterly at the private initiative of each captain and inspite of the Emperor's prohibition. Thus total ruin fell on the ex-wazir's party everywhere within the Emperor's reach.

§ 16. *Safdar Jang's grand assault on Delhi fails; he evacuates Kohtila.*

We shall now trace only the outline of the main course of this civil contest, omitting the daily skirmishes and raids. The 17th of May was signalised by Safdar Jang's capture of the Kohtila of Firuz Shah, three miles south of New Delhi. The ex-wazir entered the Old City by the Kabuli Gate and in concert with the imperial officers of the Wālāshāhi regiment who were posted in the Kohtila he was admitted within it. Imād's general Sādal Khan and Devidat, entering by other lanes, fought Safdar Jang. The battle continued till sunset when both forces retired to their bases, after heavy losses to each. At night Safdar Jang renewed the attack and took the Kohtila, mounted guns on its hillock and sent shots into the imperial fort. On the other hand, the heavy guns on the southernmost gate of the city (Delhi Darwaza) which commanded the Kohtila demolished many of its bastions and ramparts. [*TAh.* 55 *b.*]

The fifth of June witnessed a grand assault on the city walls by the rebels. Ismail Khan and other generals of the ex-wazir, posted in the Kohtila, wanted to capture the mansion of the new wazir Intizām, which abutted on the southern ramparts of New Delhi. They dug a mine from a large house midway between and carried it under

the bastion of the city wall. Early in the morning of 5th June this mine was fired; a part of the bastion fell down, and one house attached to the wazir's mansion was blown up, killing 200 men who were engaged in counter-mining. Then Safdar Jang's troops delivered an assault from the river's edge (*reti*), but 4,000 Turki soldiers opposed them from the grounds of Intizām's mansion, while the imperial trenches in the neighbourhood discharged all their guns at the assailants. The Ruhelas under Najib Khan advanced from the trenches and engaged at close quarters. The rebels turned to flight abandoning their most advanced field guns. But a large reinforcement of Jats and Qizilbashes entered the field to restore the fight, while the imperialists replied by pushing up fresh troops under Hāfiz Bakhtāwar Khan, Wajih Khan, Sādal Khan and other Turks, to support the struggling Ruhelas. The battle was long and obstinate, Najib and his brother were wounded by bullets and three to four hundred of his clansmen were slain. On Safdar's side there was heavy loss; (but the "10,000 killed and many wounded" of *TAh* 57*a* is an exaggeration.) All night the guns and rockets continued booming, but about two hours before dawn Safdar's men evacuated the Kohtila, the imperialists entered the place and seized the artillery which the

rebels had not been able to remove, including a very large gun. From this elevation the victors began to bombard Safdar Jang's tents with effect, and he was forced to withdraw his camp further away from the city. It was a great relief for the city, because shots and rockets from Safdar's raised batteries in the Kohtila used to fall within the walls of Delhi. [*TAh.* 56*b*-57*b*; *Bayān*, 279-280.]

This was a decisive repulse and the credit of it belonged to the newly arrived Ruhelas. The struggle now assumed a desultory character. Safdar Jang and his Jats roved round the city, plundering this suburb or that, and the imperialists rushing to the attacked post, driving them out, and establishing a new outpost there or strengthening the old one. The war went steadily against Safdar Jang. In each of the daily skirmishes he lost some men and in the severer battles very heavily, especially the Jats in the battle of the Idgāh on 12th June.

§ 17. *Death of Rajendra-giri Gosain.*

But the greatest disaster fell on Safdar Jang nine days after his failure to storm Delhi. On 14th June, about 2½ hours before sunset, he delivered a general attack on all the imperial trenches. The brunt of the fighting fell on the Jats and Qizilbashes of the ex-wazir, while the

Badakhshis and Marathas on the imperial side suffered heavy losses. But Imād himself rode into the trenches from the Idgāh and cheered his men by his personal example. At last the attack was beaten back and the victorious imperialists returned to their tents at midnight. This evening Rajendra-giri when attacking Kālipahāri, received a musket shot* and died of it the next day. "At the death of Rājendra-giri, Safdar Jang became heart-broken. Thereafter he never went forth personally into any battle. When this fearless *faqir* died, none was left on Safdar's side eager to fight." [*TAh.* 59*a.*]

This fighting monk used to enter the battle-field inspired by the Berserker rage. He had no regular time for fighting, nor did he wait for concerted action with the other generals or even take the previous permission of his chief, which was a strict custom in that age. He used to rush upon the enemy whenever he saw an opening or the lust of battle fired his blood. His disciples were all desperate fighters like him and used to charge artillery in utter recklessness behind him. So superior was this band of death-defying

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* *Imād.* p. 64 says that Rājendra-giri was shot dead by a man at the instigation of Ismail Khan as the two generals were rivals for the first place in their master's favour. But if he was really shot from behind, I ascribe it to the bad marksmanship and reckless firing for which Indian troops were notorious.

warriors to the mercenary soldiers of the time that Safdar Jang could refuse nothing to Rājendra-giri. This Hindu abbot was permitted by the imperial Chancellor to beat his kettledrums mounted on horses (an honour granted only to the highest rank in the Mughal peerage) and never to salam Safdar Jang like a servant but to bless him like a Pope! He was popularly believed to be a magician, invulnerable to sword or bullet. [*Imād*, 64, *Siyar*, iii. 47.]

While Safdar Jang's arm was thus paralysed, the Emperor too ordered his men to remain on the defensive and not to engage in action unless they were attacked. Thus, for ten days after this the fighting was suspended. But each day more desertions from Safdar's side took place and the strength of the imperialists increased,* and they took up new positions outside the city, pushing the rebels further and further away.

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* The forces that came to the Emperor's aid were :—Antaji Mankeshwar with 4,000 tr. (*TAh.* 50*a*) presented on 19 Apr. Najib Kh. with 15,000 horse and foot and Jeta Gujar with 2,000, 2nd June (56*b*.) Bahādur Khan Baluch (58*a*.) Two Hindu zamindars of Rewari (1700 tr.), one of Anupnagar (1700 tr.), and Sayyid Qutb Pirzada (4,000) on 18 June [58*b*.] From Sadullah of Aonla (5,000 tr) on 27 June [59*b*.] Jamiluddin Kh. (3,300) sent by Muin, 11 July [62*b*.] Ahmad Bangash's troops (reach Dasna on 15 July, 63*b*.) Muslim zamindar of Kunjpura (5,000) on 19 July [64*b*.] Bikanir contingent (7,500) on 21 July [65*b*.] The total of these was about 57,000, to which must be added 23,000 men of the *Sin-dāgh,* deserters from Safdar Jang.

§ 18. *Desultory warfare.*

When the ten days of enforced truce expired, the faint-hearted and futile character of the fighting that followed can be best understood from the Court historian's narrative : "In the morning both sides stood to arms, but only light skirmishes took place, the guns continued firing till sunset, when the two armies withdrew to their camps." [59*b*.] Safdar Jang's cause was now manifestly hopeless. Every day saw some important officers leaving him, among them being his cousin Sher Jang (26 June) and Allah Quli Kh. Kashmiri (27 June.) They reported the utterly broken spirit of the rebel army and said how none was left there who could stand up to a pitched battle and that even Suraj Mal was hankering at heart to submit to the Emperor if he was granted a written pardon and the confirmation of his estates. Negotiations were immediately opened by Suraj Mal with the new wazir. Safdar Jang fell further and further back; the Marathas looted the rear of his huge camp and his straggling baggage and transport animals. On 1st July there was an artillery duel with many losses but no gain to either side. "Every day Safdar Jang appeared, morning noon or evening, skirmished a little, and then went back. The war was prolonged." [*TAh*. 60*a*-61*b*.]

By this time (19th July) Safdar Jang had retreated to a position about 15 miles south of the city, between Badarpur and Faridabad. The imperialists advanced over the ground abandoned by him and stretched their lines from the Jamuna westwards to the hillock of Kālkā-devi, near the Qutb Minar. A detachment from their army also sacked some villages near Tughlaqabad, bringing away money, property, cattle, men and women as spoils from them; but when besieging a mud-walled village named Garhi Maidan this force of Ruhelas was routed by a Jat army in the midst of a heavy shower (25th July) and all its guns and arms captured. [*TAh.* 64*a*, 66*a*. *Sujān Ch. Jang* vi. 4.] On 19th August there was a severe fight at certain points on the long line from Tughlaqabad to the Jamuna, but artillery predominated and in the evening the rebels retired baffled, after heavy losses on both sides, the Jats and the Ruhelas having been well matched. Next day the imperialists occupied Badarpur, Safdar Jang being encamped near Faridabad, four miles south. But a few days after, he fell back nine miles to Sikri (3 miles south of Ballamgarh), on 1st September, when Imād pushed on to Faridabad and beyond to two miles from the rebel position. "On the day of his entry into Faridabad, his soldiers plundered all the inhabitants of the place;

the Mir Bakhshi forbade it, but none would listen to him." [*TAh.* 70.] Such is war. The poor innocent civil population was plundered by each side in succession as it passed through their villages.

At this time the Ruhela Baluch and Gujar auxiliaries who formed the vanguard of the imperial army, starving from arrears of pay, left their posts and withdrew to Barapula (near the southern gate of Delhi) and sat down idly. "At the time of their coming they plundered the travellers on the road and the inhabitants of Barapula"—all loyal to their sovereign! Even the imperial heavy artillery men left their trenches and came back to the city in anger. Seizing this opportunity, Safdar Jang made a bold advance over the abandoned ground. On 6th September he delivered an attack "with a countless force" on the trenches, but was defeated as Imād pushed up fresh troops. His Jat allies plundered all way-farers and grain merchants passing between the city and the imperial trenches, up to eleven miles of the walls of Delhi. Next day (8th September) the Jat rovers were out again. No grain could reach the royal army and Imād was filled with despair at this turn in the fortunes of his party. On 12th September he went from the trenches to the palace and pleaded with the Emperor and the

Queen-mother for the granting of treasure to pay the troops and the sending up of reinforcements; but after three hours of fruitless discussion he returned to his mansion, saying in disgust, "I have done what I could up till now. Let the Emperor henceforth entrust his work to some one else." During his absence, Safdar Jang advanced and surprised and cut off the outposts left by him north of Faridabad, at Sarāi Khwājah Bakhtāwar, Badarpur and other places, and effectually stopped the conveyance of grain and traffic to the royal army on the south side of the city. [*TAh.* 70*b*-72*b*.]

These struggles were strangely intermixed with peace overtures from Safdar and Suraj Mal to the new wazir, in order to spite Imād who was all for war. At last a treacherous night raid by the returning Jat escort of the wazir's peace envoys upon the imperial trenches from the north or Delhi side in concert with Safdar Jang's men who attacked the same section from the south or Faridabad side, caused such heavy slaughter as to turn the capital against the idea of making any peace with these false traitors. "Every noble and commoner abused the wazir for being the medium of peace with such a man . . . . The peace negotiations were cut short (22nd Sept.) amidst

the curses and oaths of the Emperor's entire Court." [74.]

§ 19. *Grand battle of 29 September.*

At last Najib Khan was paid a portion of his dues and induced to return to the trenches near Faridabad with his Ruhela contingent (24 Sep.) Gun munition was also sent there from the fort. Thus strengthened Imād issued from the city to meet the rebels once more. On 29th September, Suraj Mal and other generals of Safdar Jang in full force and with many big guns and smaller pieces, assaulted the trenches of the Marathas on the right wing of the imperialist position, which had no large artillery. A severe fight raged in which many Marathas were slain, but a constant stream of reinforcements sustained an even battle, till at last Imād and Najib arrived on the scene and made gallant charges. Imād fearlessly drove his elephant into the enemy ranks. One elephant carrying his banner was killed; the elephant he was riding had its tusks broken by shot. He then took horse, charged and routed the Jats. Vast numbers were slain on both sides; Ismail Khan was wounded with a spear thrust. Imād pursued the flying enemy for four miles and returned to his tents at sunset. [*TAh.* 75*b*-76*a*.] The victors followed up their success next day by

driving the rebels further south and advancing close to Ballamgarh.

§ 20. *Emperor's cowardice prevents decisive victory.*

But though the imperialists repulsed every attack of Safdar Jang and steadily pushed him further away from the capital, they gained no decisive victory. Of this failure to reap the utmost fruits of their military superiority, the Emperor's cowardice was the sole cause. Imād, Najib, and other generals again and again urged him to order an attack in full force and to ride out to the field to personally hearten his troops. Such a bold offensive, they argued, would end the war at one blow, while the protracted and desultory struggle which a purely defensive strategy entailed was exhausting his treasury, damping the ardour of his army and leading to daily mutiny and abandonment of the trenches by his starving troops. But Ahmad Shah had not the heart to join a battle even from the safety of the rear. On 29th June Imād had come from his tent in the Idgāh trenches and told the Emperor and the Queen-mother, "I have spent all the accumulated hoards of my father and grandfather in paying my soldiers and they are now pressing me for their remaining dues. If the Emperor wishes to

fight he must delay no longer. If he has decided on peace, let me disband my troops." He urged the Emperor to ride to his army; Ahmad Shah ordered his own escort to get ready and even put his armour on; the imperial generals stood all day under arms in their trenches in expectation, but the Emperor did not issue from the palace! [*TAh.* 60*b*-61*a*.] On 11th July Najib Khan Ruhela and Bahadur Kh. Baluch told Ahmad that a large army had gathered under his banners by that time and that trench warfare would greatly delay a decision and increase the cost of feeding the troops, and therefore a battle in the open was the best policy. As the result of the discussion, the 16th of July was fixed for such an attack. On that day Imad came to the palace and repeatedly entreated the Emperor to ride forth lest shame and loss should fall upon his arms; but Ahmad gave no reply up to noon, and thereafter dismissed the generals and soldiers so long standing ready armed! At this Imād taunted the new wazir with cowardice in wishing to remain in the safe shelter of the palace with the Emperor, while sending him (Imād) to fight unsupported. They took oaths to go into battle on 19th July without fail, but nothing was done even on that day. Again, on 26th July Imad came from the fighting front and urged the Emperor to the extreme to order a

pitched battle and to join it himself. But the Emperor by advice of the wazir declined and "the Queen-mother sent Imād to his home with smooth speeches"! [*TAh.* 63*a*-66*b*.]

This delay in achieving a military decision ruined the Emperor's finances. The cost of the huge army (80,000 men at least) gathered round him and idly standing under arms month after month exhausted his treasures, jewels, gold plate, all his mother's hoards, the property in the imperial stores and factories, and the spoils of the daily sack of Safdar Jang's followers and suspected partisans in the city. Almost every day some regiment or other of unpaid soldiers left their trenches and rioted in the streets of Delhi. The imperial council was divided by the increasing jealousy between the wazir and the Bakhshi. All the credit of the organisation of the armed opposition to Safdar Jang and the actual fighting with him went to Imād, whose prestige grew apace, while the timid wazir, hiding in his closet, suffered an eclipse in public estimation and power. Intizām, therefore, tried his utmost to spoil Imād's plans and brought the senseless Emperor and his mother to accept this policy. A peace at any price with the rebel was also urgently necessary for the Emperor if he was not to die of starvation. But on this question, too, there was a clash of interest

and policy between Intizām and Imād. The Bakhshi wanted to crush Safdar Jang totally and take away his provinces for himself, while the wazir dreaded such an issue as the creation of a stronger rival to his pre-eminence than Safdar Jang and therefore wished to save the ex-wazir and preserve him as a friend in his future contest with Imād!

On 12th September Suraj Mal had opened secret negotiations with the wazir, offering him twelve lakhs of Rupees if he could make peace. These overtures had failed at the time as we have seen. [*TAh.* 72*b*, 73*b*, 74*b*.] And now, about the middle of October, the Jat chieftain sent his envoys directly to Imād, proposing to pay a few lakhs of Rupees as tribute but demanding to be confirmed in all the lands he stood possessed of at this time. Imād wished to restrict him to the old territories of his father Badan Singh and make him disgorge his recent usurpations. So, these negotiations also failed. [*TAh.* 78*a*.]

§ 21. *Madho Singh comes and makes peace.*

In the meantime the Emperor in utter helplessness had appealed to Mādho Singh the Rajah of Jaipur, as the greatest of his feudatories, to come and save him, while this quarrel between his wazir and Bakhshi was threatening to ruin his

State. Mādho Singh started with a large army, took bonds on the way from the zamindars of Rewāri for 50 lakhs (afterwards reduced by the Emperor to four lakhs) for the expenses of his troops, and arrived at Nagla on the Jamunā, south of Delhi city and due east of Raisina, on 10th October. He interviewed the Emperor during a ride on the 15th. Then, Mādho Singh, seated on the same elephant with the wazir, was led to the Diwān-i-khās and had audience of the Queen-mother, receiving a fringed *pālki* and the *māhi* and *marātib* decorations. On the 18th he and his officers were formally presented to the Emperor in the Diwān-i-khās, the Emperor advancing on foot to the door of that hall to welcome him. On 23rd October, Mādho Singh paid a business visit to Ahmad Shah and the two held a long and secret consultation. The Emperor appealed to him, "In view of the loyal services of your forefathers, it is the duty of an old hereditary servant like you to save the empire in such a crisis; otherwise, nothing but dust would remain on earth as its name and mark." He then complained of the ingratitude of the three—Safdar, Intizam and Imad, who had been brought up by Muhammad Shah as his children, but were now working against him. Mādho Singh, being a man of

experience, consoled the Emperor. [*TAh.* 80, *S. P. D.* xxvii. 83.]

But peace could not be so easily made. The Emperor's secret plan of coming to terms with Safdar Jang behind Imād's back was betrayed. On 23rd October, Safdar Jang gave to Aqibat Mahmud copies of the letters formerly written to him by the Emperor asking him to make peace through the wazir. Aqibat showed these to Imād who sent them to the Emperor. But Ahmad Shah in fear and trembling wrote to Imād to say that these letters were forged by Safdar Jang! "The wazir tried his best to make peace with Safdar Jang and thus rob Imad of the fruits of his recent great exertions and expenditure. Owing to this disagreement between Intizam and Imad, the Emperor's affairs were ruined. Seeing the Emperor so bent on peace, Imād himself opened negotiations. Then the wazir, in order to spoil Imād's plan, arranged that the Emperor should go on a visit to the garden of Khizirabad and Madho Singh should bring Suraj Mal there to secure his pardon. This was done on 25th October, Suraj Mal being represented by his agent. The wazir rejoiced that the peace was not made by Imād. Suraj Mal from his camp south of Ballamgarh came with a few men to Mādho Singh's tent and saw him as well as the wazir

who was waiting there by previous arrangement. In the evening the wazir returned to his own mansion; Suraj Mal remained in Mādho Singh's camp for that night and the next five days. [*TAh.* 81*b*-83*a.*]

A settlement was made with Safdar Jang also, but in the same secret and confused fashion. On 5th November, Mādho Singh's officer Fath Singh conveyed to Safdar Jang an imperial *farmān*, a robe of honour, an aigrette, a jewelled crest-ornament, a pearl necklace and a horse from the Emperor. When Imād protested against this act, Ahmad Shah replied, "I know nothing of this. I never sent these things to him." The wazir too professed equal ignorance. Some courtiers said that it was the Emperor's *khilat* lately presented to Mādho Singh which that Rajah had sent to Safdar Jang! But whatever the truth of this matter might be, the war with Safdar Jang was formally ended, all the same. Mādho Singh's work as peace-maker being done he was permitted to return to his kingdom without being required to come to the Emperor's presence for taking formal leave. His reward was the imperial fort of Rantambhor which his father and elder brother had begged in vain from Muhammad Shah. [*TAh.* 83*a*-84*b.*] On 7th November, Safdar Jang broke up his camp near Sikri (three miles

south of Ballamgarh) and set out on his march towards Oudh. He still carried with himself, surrounded by scarlet screens, the bogus prince whom he had enthroned as Emperor in May last, but from the way sent him to Agra in charge of Amar Singh. Crossing the Jamuna at Mathura (17th November), he took the route to Oudh. [*TA h.* 84*b*-89*b*.]

This final withdrawal of Safdar Jang from the capital completed the process by which the ablest and most experienced of the elder peers, who could possibly have reformed the administration if properly supported by the Emperor, gave up the task in despair and retired to some distant province where they could at least achieve something really great and good, though in a smaller sphere. The practical independence of these provincial governors and their scornful unconcern with the affairs of Delhi in Bengal Oudh and the Deccan, coupled with the Maratha seizure of Gujrat and Malwa and the Afghan annexation of the Panjab, contracted the Empire of India into a small area round Delhi and a few districts of the modern U. P., where small men only fought and intrigued for small personal ends.

CHAPTER XII.

DOWNFALL OF AHMAD SHAH.

§ 1. *Difficulties of imperial Government after Safdar Jang's departure.*

The Emperor Ahmad Shah reigned for six months only after the end of Safdar Jang's rebellion, and these were months of unceasing disorder in and outside the capital and increasing misery and degradation of the Crown. The retreat of the vanquished ex-wazir from the contest with his sovereign did not bring peace and prosperity back to the Delhi Government, nor could this single cause effect such a miracle. This hectic struggle had exhausted the wealth of the Emperor, dried up the sources of revenue, and left his Government overwhelmed with debt. In the course of it, he and his advisers had to concentrate all their thought and resources on the one task of defeating the enemy at the gate and had to neglect everything else. When this danger had at last rolled away, it was found that the work before them was nothing less than the building up of a new empire out of chaos. For such a task neither Ahmad Shah nor his Chancellor or army

Chief was gifted. To the utter bankruptcy of the Treasury was added the deadly jealousy between the two highest ministers of State which was unmasked in all its shamelessness by the exit of their common foe. As early as a month before Safdar Jang's breach with the Emperor, the shrewd Marātha agent at Delhi had noted that the Turāni party was internally divided and formed four factions none of which would obey or work with any other. [*S. P. D.* xxi. 55.] During the war with Safdar Jang, Imād had openly taunted the new wazir with cowardice for preferring to remain with the Emperor within shelter of Delhi's walls while throwing the brunt of the actual fighting upon him and his personal contingent. He had later suffered from the wazir's duplicity and mischief-making in secretly negotiating a peace with Safdar Jang, while the Emperor's publicly declared policy was that of war to the death with that rebel. The timid powerless sovereign, placed between these two strong rivals, tried to save himself by lying to Imād, while he secretly followed Intizam's counsel. After Safdar Jang's departure, an open clash between the wazir and the Bakhshi was inevitable, and when Ahmad Shah chose to side with Intizām he was bound to be involved in his wazir's fate.

This civil war had left a legacy of debt which

it was beyond any man's power to liquidate. The new imperial levies and allies, numbering 80,000 fighting men, cost* at the lowest estimate 24 *lakhs* of Rupees a month and they had been embodied for seven months, so that the total charge under this head amounted to one *kror* and 68 *lakhs*. In addition to this, the existing old army had been in arrears of salary for over two years at the outbreak of the civil war. And this happened at a time when the Emperor could hardly raise two *lakhs* by selling his plate and jewellery, the bankers were refusing to advance money on the strength of an order on the revenue of any province, and even the Delhi agent of the chief banker of Bengal (called *Nagar-seth* in *TAh.* but better known as *Jagat-seth*) had been drained dry in the lean years before the war. Therefore, the last six months of Ahmad Shah's reign were continually disturbed by the tumults of the starving unpaid soldiery in an even more aggravated form than during Jāvid Khan's *regime*. The officials and menials of the palace were unpaid for

* The Marātha agent in Delhi reported that a trooper cost one Rupee a day in Delhi (*S.P.D.* xxi. 55, *Aiti Patr.* ii. 89.) Ghaziuddin *reduced* the pay of his troopers to Rs. 30 a month in 1751. The pay of the Ruhela soldiers was, as a matter of grace to a bankrupt State and a temporary concession, fixed at 12 annas per trooper and 4 annas per infantryman in Sep. 1753. [*TAh.* 67 *a.*] The normal monthly salary of the cavalry was Rs. 50 each.

32 months (1753.) The Court accused Imād and his right hand man Aqibat Mahmud of putting the soldiers up to make these demonstrations against the Government, in order to increase its helplessness. The Emperor gave the blank reply that he had placed all his treasure and territory in charge of Imād and had nothing with him now to give to anybody. As he told Imād on 28th December, 1753, "Pay the musketeers of the Top-khānah from the 15 *lakhs* I have entrusted to you. Pay the salaries of the other regiments, especially the *Sin-dāgh risāla* out of the revenue of Ballamgarh and the subah of Allahabad which I have conferred upon you. I leave you full power, but do not practise oppression." [*TAh.* 103*b*.]

The most pressing creditors of State were the Ruhela and Maratha auxiliaries and the Badakhshi brigade lured away from Safdar Jang's side, for whose monthly salary Imād as Bakhshi was directly responsible. Imād, therefore, first set himself to reconquer the district south of Delhi where Jāt usurpers predominated in the villages, and he planned to attack thereafter the great Jāt kingdom of Bharatpur and levy a large tribute. At the same time the Ruhela leader Najib Khan*

* As early as 13th Sept. 1753 the Emperor owed 25 lakhs to the Ruhela soldiery and could pay only 4 lakhs on the 16th [*TAh.* 67 *a*].

tried to recover his dues by violence. Aqibat Mahmud reported to the Emperor that the Ruhelas were dunning Imād for their arrears and had practically kept him in confinement on 16th and 17th November. Soon afterwards a settlement was made: "The dues of Najib Khan Ruhela and Bahādur Khan Baluch, amounting to 15 lakhs, were assigned on the revenue of the Ganges-Jamunā doāb and certain villages east of the Ganges, which had formerly been in the possession of the Ruhelas. So the Ruhelas left Delhi for their homes (26th Nov.) But immediately after crossing the Jamunā they invested Patparganj and seizing the headman of the place demanded lakhs of Rupees from that mart and beat him; they did the same thing at Shāhdara, and after forcibly occupying the toll-offices (*nāka*) on the river bank robbed the wayfarers. They left Patparganj only after taking Rs. 35,000." In March next, Najib Khan dispossessed the official collector of Sarhind, and in April occupied Saharanpur and the wazir's jagirs in that region, but restored them in May 1754. [*TAh.* 87*a*-88*b*, 121*a*, 125*a*.]

§ 2. *Imād's conquest of the district south of Delhi; murder of Balu Jat.*

Imād's chief agent Aqibat Mahmud Khan opened the campaign of reconquest in the Farida-

bad district, south of Delhi, which lay in the Bakhshi's *jāgir*. Here the leading disturber of law and order was Balu Jāt. When Aqibat went with 500 Badakhshi and 2,000 Maratha troopers and demanded the revenue of the district and the tribute due to the Emperor, Balu resiled from his promise and showed fight. Imād sent 7,000 more troops and 30 pieces of light artillery with rockets to Aqibat to match the guns of Ballamgarh. After some fighting Balu made his submission, saw Aqibat and agreed to pay the rent and tribute due from him. Then Aqibat advanced to Palwal, 14 miles south of Ballamgarh, but found the peasants afraid to pay him rent lest Balu should demand it again. The revenue-collector of the place, whom Balu had ousted, told Aqibat that unless he captured Ballamgarh and killed Balu he would fail to get control over the administration of the district. A thānahdār sent by him to Fathpur village was turned out by the ryots at Balu's bidding. Aqibat, therefore, marched back to a plain near Ballamgarh and asked Balu to come and settle the revenue demand. Balu arrived with his *diwān*, one son and an escort of 250 men. Aqibat demanded payment, saying that as Imād had made the peace for him and the Emperor was pressing Imād for the tribute, Imād in his turn was censuring Aqibat for negligence

at this delay in collecting the money. The Jāt chief replied defiantly, "I have not brought the money in my pocket. I only promised to pay the tribute after collecting the rents. If you want to wrest this tract from me, you will have to fight for it." High words were exchanged and Balu in anger laid his hand on the hilt of his sword. But the Badakhshis surrounding Aqibat's *pālki* fell upon him and slew him with his son, his *diwān* and nine other men* (29 November, 1753.) The garrison of Ballamgarh kept up a fire till midnight, after which they evacuated the fort. Aqibat took possession of it with all its artillery and armament and gave the other property within up to plunder by his soldiers. The district was conferred upon Imād.

Aqibat quickly followed up this success. In the following week he sacked the walled villages of Mitnaul and Hathin (12m. s. and s. w. of Palwal), the refractory peasants of which had offered fight all day and fled away at night. He then attacked the small mud-forts of the Jāts all

* *TAh.* 89*a*-92*a*. Khwājah Aftab Kh, the jamadar of Badakhshis, who had cut off Balu's head, was rewarded with the two pearl pendants taken from the Jat's ears. The head was exposed on a pillar by the roadside near Faridabad (92*b*, 98*b*.) *Ballamgarh* was named *Nizamgarh* after Imād's new title Nizamulmulk Asaf Jah. (106*b*.)

around Palwal and brought them under his rule. Then after a visit to Delhi, he started (27 December) again for the Faridabad district, taking Khandoji Holkar and his troops to assist him in the campaign. But he could not control the Faridabad district, as his soldiers refused to obey his agents, and the Jāts seized this opportunity to expel the outposts set up by him at Garhi Hathin and other newly conquered places. So, he appealed to his master to come in person, and Imād issued from Delhi to Ballamgarh.

Khandoji encamped at Hodal (17m. s. of Palwal) and sent detachments which plundered the Jāt villages all around, even as far as Barsāna and Nandgāon (12 and 17 miles south), ousting Suraj Mal's son from them and establishing Marātha posts there (end of December 1753.) This strengthened Aqibat's position and he sacked the Jāt village of Ghangaula (9m. s.w. of Ballamgarh) belonging to a brother of Balu and planted his own thānah there (5 Jan. 1754.) On 8th January, Imad advanced from Ballamgarh to Palwal and got into touch with Khandoji at Hodal. The fort of Ghāsera (15 miles due west of Palwal) had been wrested by Suraj Mal from Bahādur Singh Bargujar on 23 April 1753, after that chieftain had slain his women and rushed to death in battle at the head of 25 desperate followers. Imād

appointed Bahādur's son Fath Singh master of his father's fort, which the Jāt garrison had now evacuated in terror. Thus a mortal enemy of the Jāts was planted there with orders to attack their hamlets around. In short, most of the Jāt homes on both banks of the Jamunā now fell into Imād's hands and his rule was established even as far south as Mathurā and Agra, from which the Jāt usurpers fled away. Another officer expelled the Jāt force that had seized Koil (Aligarh) and Jalesar. Imad sent his men to restore the civil administration in all these long-disturbed places and to induce the peasants to return to cultivation (middle of January.) Soon afterwards the Marāthas laid siege to Kumbher and Khandoji was called there. [*TAh.* 93*b*, 94*b*, 102*a*, 104*b*-107*a*.]

§ 3. *New Maratha army arrives in the North; its policy.*

At the outbreak of Safdar Jang's rebellion, the Peshwā had received an appeal for help from the Emperor and repeated letters from his agents in Delhi to send a strong force to Hindustan in order to maintain the Maratha position there, retain hold of the concessions previously granted, and to improve them by taking advantage of the civil war. Both sides sent agents to bid for

Marātha armed support, but the Peshwā wisely decided not to back the rebel wazir. Of his troops, however, only 4,000 had reached Delhi early enough to take part in the opening battles and to receive regular pay from the imperial Government. These were reinforced later by fresh detachments, probably not exceeding 6,000 horse. The main Maratha army, however, was directed to sit on the fence, watch for the end of the civil war and then join the victor or take advantage of the exhaustion of both sides, so as to increase the Maratha domination in the North. This main army, led by the Peshwa's younger brother Raghunāth Rāo, was joined by Malhar Holkar on the Narmadā (22 Sep.-5 Oct., 1753), traversed a part of Malwa, and then crossed the Mukundarā pass (29 Oct.) into Jaipur territory, because he heard that peace had been made between the Emperor and Safdar Jang. But a body of 4,000 horse under Khandoji, the son of Malhar Holkar, arrived near Delhi and encamped at the tank of Kishandās on 21 November.

By this time Safdar Jang had withdrawn from the field, and now began a shameful scramble between Intizām and Imād for winning this Maratha force over to his side. Imād visited Khandoji the day after his arrival. On the 25th the wazir sent Rajah Jugalkishor to the young

Marātha chief, who refused to see him, saying, "Malharji has sent me to the Mir Bakhshi. I have nothing to do with any one else." On 1st December, the Emperor called Bāpu Rao Hingané, Antāji Mānkeshwar and other Marātha agents in Delhi and held a prolonged discussion with them and the wazir. The wazir desired that the Marātha generals who had come should dissociate themselves from the Bakhshi, and follow the wazir's directions. The Deccanis refused, as they wished to be friendly with the Nizām's family for guarding their interests in the South and had designs against Suraj Mal whose protector was the wazir and enemy the Bakhshi. So they ended the conference with the evasive reply, "After the arrival of Raghunāth Rao and Malhar whatever is considered expedient by them will be done." Not daunted by this rebuff, the Emperor led by his wazir, sent to Khandoji 22,000 gold coins and robes of honour and other presents on 10th December; but the Maratha scornfully rejected them with the remark, "I am not a servant of the Emperor that he should bestow *khilats* on me. I have come here at my father's order to join the Bakhshi in his campaign against Suraj Mal. My father will arrive after a few days. Speak to him and give him what you have to say and to give." The gold coins offered as an

inducement for his going back from Delhi and saving the environs from daily pillage, were also rejected, at the Bakhshi's instigation. Three days later, the desperate wazir sent Rajah Devidat to the *diwān* of Khandoji to negotiate for an alliance with him. Nothing could kindle a sense of shame in this degraded Court. On the 23rd the Emperor sent a eunuch to sound Khandoji, but he answered as before that he had come to assist the Bakhshi and had no concern with the Emperor's service. Then the Emperor appealed to Imād, and Aqibat was sent to persuade Khandoji to visit the Emperor. [*TA h.* 88*a*-98*b*.]

§ 4. *Khandoji Holkar's audience with the Emperor.*

The 26th of December was fixed for the interview, which was held in a tent in the Nili Chhatri garden, close to the Jamuna, north of the fort. The chamberlain of the audience hall, before ushering him in, asked the Maratha what he had brought as present (*nazar* and *nisār*) for the sovereign. Khandoji replied that he had brought no gold coin with himself as he had no idea of an interview, but had come to bathe in the Jamunā for the conjunction of the moon, when Aqibat Mahmud brought him by importunity to the Presence. The chamberlain took 21 *mohars* out

of his own pocket, placed them before the Emperor, and cried out "Khandoji presents a *nazar* of a hundred *mohars*, an elephant, and a horse." The Emperor ordered the customary *khilat* for him, but when Khandoji was taken to an anteroom to be invested in this robe of honour, he declined it, saying, "If Antāji Mānkeshwar, who was once our servant but has been created a peer of this Court, is never allowed to come to the Presence in future, then only can I accept a *khilat*." After a long wrangle the helpless eunuchs agreed to this condition, robed him, and led him back to the Presence, where the new courtier made only two bows of thanksgiving in the place of the customary four. When a sword was ordered to be presented to him, he at first demanded that the Emperor should sling it round his neck with his own hands and could be made to accept it from the hands of the armoury officer with the greatest difficulty. Thereafter he again made only two *taslims!* The Emperor at last said, "I had called you only to assist me in fighting Safdar Jang. Now that by the grace of God that business is over, I give you *conge* to return home. When I need you again, I shall summon you." Khandoji replied, "I am now under your blessed feet, and wish to remain here." The Emperor repeatedly gave him formal leave to depart but he made no reply.

In fact, Khandoji, besides being immoderately proud of his troops and bravery, used to remain day and night under the intoxication of wine and could not hold any polite conversation with the Emperor. At last he made two bows and was dismissed. He was next taken by order to the wazir's house where he was hospitably entertained till midnight. [*TAh.* 99*b*-100*b*.]

§ 5. *Maratha siege of Kumbher, death of Khandé Rao Holkar.*

The Marathas had imposed claims to *chauth* or contribution upon various Rājput States ever since Bāji Rāo's visit in 1736 and particularly in connection with the succession disputes in the three States of Bundi, Jaipur and Mārwār. At the end of September 1753, a powerful army under the Peshwa's younger brother Raghunāth Rāo crossed the Narmadā to realise these dues. Joined by Malhar Holkar, he entered Jaipur territory and spent over two months there (9 Nov. 1753-15 Jan. 1754), securing payment from Jaipur (12 lakhs) and several smaller States. Suraj Mal, who had formed a secret defensive understanding with Mādho Singh during their return from Delhi after making peace with the Emperor, had sent his envoy Ruprām Koṭhāri to the Maratha camp. Malhar had demanded two *krores* from him on the

ground that Suraj Mal had gathered much more than that amount in his plunder of the suburbs of Delhi. The Jāt envoy offered four *lakhs* for buying the Marathas off, in addition to the Emperor's regular tribute; but Malhar would not accept it and invaded the Jāt country. Inspired by Suraj Mal, the heir and minister of the old king Badan Singh, the Jāt nobles decided on resisting this illegal demand and put their forts in a strong posture of defence, while their common soldiers were animated by a keen sense of brotherhood and the proud consciousness of never having been defeated.

When the Maratha army approached the famous Jāt forts of Dig (16 Jan. 1754), Bharatpur and Kumbher, they were driven back by the fire of the artillery on the walls. One pitched battle was fought in the plain with heavy slaughter on both sides, after which Suraj Mal, overcome by the enemy's superior numbers, shut himself up in Kumbher. The Marathas sat down before it, but they had no siege guns, and merely plundered and occupied the country round. Raghunath Rao encamped at Pingaré (near Kumbher) on 20th January and removed to the plain before Kumbher on 28th February, where he continued to stay till 22nd May. Khandé Rāo Holkar was encamped at Hodal early in January, engaged in expelling

the Jāt outposts in that district. He was now ordered by his father to march with his 4,000 horse and join in the siege of Kumbher, where he arrived after looting parts of Mewat on his way. Malhar, through his ally Imād-ul-mulk, begged the Emperor for the loan of siege-guns from the imperial arsenals in Delhi and Agra, but Ahmad Shah, tutored by his wazir, delayed compliance on the plea of lack of money to pay his artillerymen and replenish the munitions exhausted during the war with Safdar Jang.

In March Imād at the call of Malhar marched from Mathura to Kumbher, where Aqibat joined him. But the daily efforts of the allies failed against the fort, because of their want of breaching artillery, while complete investment for stopping ingress and egress was impossible. Khandé Rāo having made covered lanes approached the walls. One day (*c.* 15 March 1754) he had gone in a *pālki* to inspect his trenches, in his usual tipsy condition, when the fort opened fire and he was killed by a *zamburak* shot. Nine of his wives burnt themselves on his pyre, the only survivor being the little girl Ahalyā Bāi, destined to rise to fame as one of India's noblest queens and purest saints. Malhar was frantic with grief at the death of his beloved son and vowed to extirpate the Jāts in revenge. He first went to Mathura to

perform the funeral rites of his son in that sacred city. Imād came to condole with him, remarking, "Henceforth look upon me as your son in the place of Khando." Suraj Mal, too, professed the deepest sorrow for this issue of war and sent mourning robes for Malhar and Khandé's son. The Emperor, on 9 April, presented robes to Malhar and ornaments to Malhar's wife, through Bāpu Rāo Hingané, in token of his sympathy.

But the mud-walls of Kumbher laughed the Marātha siege to scorn, as those of Bharatpur did the British half a century later. Skirmishes took place between the rival foraging parties, in which many were slain. The siege dragged on for four months. At last in the middle of May, peace was made; Ruprām, on behalf of his master, gave a written bond to pay the Marāthas Rs. 30 *lakhs* by instalments in three years. In addition to this, the two *krores* which had been previously imposed by Imād as *peshkash* due from the Jāt Rājah to the Emperor, was now agreed to be paid to Imād and the Marāthas instead. So the siege ended; Imād left the place on 18th May and Raghunāth Rāo on the 22nd, and both came to Mathurā. [*TAh.* 108*b*-110*a*, 114*a*, 117*b*, 121*b*, 128*a*. *Sujān Charitra, Jang* vii. incomplete. *S.P.D.*, xxvii, 79, and p. 94.]

§ 6. *Conflict between Emperor and Imād.*

In the meantime a complete estrangement had taken place between the Emperor and his Bakhshi and an open conflict between the two was shortly to be precipitated which ended in the ruin of Ahmad. In the months following Safdar Jang's departure, the star of Imād was steadily in the ascendant. He was the organiser of the imperial victory, he was the vanquisher of Safdar Jang, he had thereafter subjugated the turbulent Jāt population of the district south of the capital, and Malhar Holkar was his constant ally. There was no noble in the empire who could stand against him. His one difficulty was from lack of money. He had exhausted all his ancestral hoards and had saddled himself with debt during the six months' life and death struggle with the ex-wazir. But the public treasury was empty, revenue had ceased to come in from the provinces. The only course open to Imād was to seize the rents of the Crownlands and the other nobles' jāgirs in the districts within easy distance of the capital. This fact separated the Emperor from him more quickly than his sovereign's alarm and jealousy, fomented by Intizām, at his growing power.

When the war with Safdar Jang broke out, it was agreed in the presence of the Emperor and

his ministers that all the wealth of the realm should be first devoted to the work of crushing the rebel, and that on his downfall the revenue of the Deccan should be paid by Imād (as Nizam-ul-mulk) into the imperial treasury after deducting the dues of the soldiers, old and newly recruited; the wazir (Intizām) agreed to do the same in respect of the revenue of his provinces of the Panjab and Kashmir; the *subahs* under Safdar Jang would be taken away from him and given, Oudh half and half to the new wazir and Bakhshi, and Allahabad for paying the salary of the *Sindāgh* troops. [*TAh.* 96*a.*] But this scheme did not work as it was based upon many calculations which proved futile in practice, and the trouble about money continued to grow worse. On 20th December 1753, Aqibat went to the Emperor to reassure him and counteract the efforts of his master's enemies at Court. Two days later Imād himself waited on the Emperor, who promised him the *subahdāri* of Allahabad if he remained true to his king and paid him the surplus revenue regularly. [97*b.*] At this time Imād used to make troublesome requests in almost every affair out of enmity to the wazir and thus increased the Emperor's difficulty, though Ahmad Shah very tactfully smoothed these conflicts or overlooked Imād's perversity. But Imad gradually grew disloyal

and in the pride of power even dreamt of seizing the throne by setting aside such a cowardly imbecile and false sovereign as Ahmad. [102*a* & *b*.]

On the question of clearing the soldiers' arrears, there was a sharp conflict of opinion between the Emperor and the Paymaster. Imād pressed him to go with him, chastise the rebels in the districts near the capital, collect the rents, or else sell the Jāt kingdom to Muhakam Singh (the son of Churaman) dispossessed by Churaman's nephew Badan Singh. But the Emperor would not leave these affairs in Imād's hands; he listened to the wazir's counsels and often negatived Imād's proposals, holding that the Bakhshi could easily meet his army charges from the estates placed under him. Even when the Emperor entrusted 15 lakhs to Imād for paying the soldiers, the Bakhshi kept the money for himself and provoked daily riots by the starving soldiery against the Emperor, his household officers, and his wazir. [103*a*—104*b*.] Early in February 1754, Imād sent a detachment to take possession of Koil and Sikandrabad, which were estates of the Emperor's privy purse, while Aqibat Mahmud squeezed the peasants of Rewāri, another Crownland district. This usurpation dried up the royal income and brought the inmates of the palace to

the brink of starvation. At the same time the row of the soldiers in arrears continued for two months in the city of Delhi. The Emperor could do nothing to remedy it; he wrote to the Bakhshi to keep his promise and pay these men, but Imād merely put off a settlement from day to day. [*TAh.* 109 *b*, 111*b*, 113*b*.]

§ 7. *Aqibat Mahmud enters Delhi and terrorises Emperor.*

From Kumbher Imād sent repeated requests to the Emperor for the loan of big guns for the siege of that fort, but the Emperor, as advised by the wazir, evaded a reply. At last Aqibat was sent with a strong Maratha force to visit the Emperor and personally press the request for the guns. The Emperor feared that Aqibat was coming in such strength to insult and oppress him. So, he at first thought of offering armed opposition to his entry; he inspected the muster-rolls of the troops available and ordered the city of Delhi to be guarded in force at vital points, as during the war with Safdar Jang. But his officers shrank from the idea of facing Aqibat's superior forces*

* "16th March 1754. The Emperor was alarmed, but nothing was done to prevent Aqibat from entering the city."

"24th March, 1754. Aqibat's agent came to the fort gate and invited the officers of the imperial artillery to join the mutineers

and nothing was done. And yet the foolish Emperor would not make peace by giving up the guns!

Aqibat Mahmud entered Delhi on 16th March. The city had then been for several weeks past in the hands of the mutinous soldiery demanding their pay, now 26 months in arrears; law and order had disappeared; the Emperor and the wazir lived besieged in their palaces. The Badakhshi soldiers with Aqibat began to oppress the Hindu jewellers for money (20 March.) On the 24th these troops roved in the suburbs, throwing the city into alarm and driving the Emperor to order his fort artillery men to stand to arms ready for repelling any possible attack. "Aqibat continued to send his servants to seize all men who were reported to be wealthy and extort money from them on the false charge of their being depositories of the wealth of Safdar Jang. In concert with Antāji Mānkeshwar, he used to send men to levy rent and contributions from the Emperor's Crownland and privy purse villages east of the Jamunā. The

as they had come to secure the due salaries of the latter as well. But the appeal failed and the fort artillery remained loyal. In the evening, the imperial artillery captains (so long on guard) went back to their places. The Emperor was alarmed, but sent no order to any one [against Aqibat] as he knew that *none would obey him.*" [*TAh.* 115*b*, 119*b*.]

Emperor and the wazir considered it a great gain that they could remain confined in their own houses! To their protests, Aqibat gave a defiant answer, pointing out the huge arrears of the soldiers' salary and the wazir's refusal to supply the cannon needed at the siege of Kumbher." [*TAh.* 118*a*—120*a.*]

§ 8. *Street fighting in Delhi, 8-9 April, 1754.*

At last on 8th April, Aqibat got up a demonstration by his rowdy Badakhshi troops to terrorise the Emperor into yielding the guns. At his instigation the full strength (5,000) of these foreign mercenaries went to all sides of the fort and closed all its entrances and exits. One body of 500 of them appeared below the *jharoka* window of the palace with loaded muskets and lighted matches and replied to the challenge of the guard above, "We are the Emperor's soldiers of the *Sin-dāgh* regiment and have been unpaid for a year. Give us our salary!" Groups of them gathered at every custom-barrier of the city and in the plain outside the fort, stopping traffic and plundering whoever came within their reach. "The Emperor ordered his men not to fight unless attacked. During that day and night none of the men of the imperial artillery and stores who were within the fort could come out for eating any meal,

but remained prisoners without food till the noon of next day. The Emperor quaked in extreme alarm.

After sunset, the Emperor's palace superintendent Khwājah Bakhtāwar Khan went from the fort to the wazir's house to arrange for some means of paying these soldiers. When returning, he borrowed five light guns from the wazir by way of defence and carried them in front of his party. When he arrived near the Jama Masjid the Badakhshis by a rush seized these guns, and his handful of guards was borne down by the superior number of the mutineers, many of them being slain in offering resistance. The wazir sent up reinforcements under his artillery officer Mir Barkhurdār Khān, who fired on the rioters, but finding the street blocked cut his way with his Mughalia followers through the crowd and entered the Jama Masjid for safety. The Badakhshis, finding that he had escaped, stood in force in the Faiz Bazār nearby. But they were subjected to a double fire, by Bakhtawar and Barkhurdār, from the houses on the two sides, as they lay unprotected in the street below. The thatches of the shops in the Khās Bazār before the gate of the Jama Masjid caught fire from the discharge of muskets and guns, and at last the Badakhshis fled away losing

many men and abandoning the wazir's *rahkala* they had seized. Bakhtāwar then re-entered the fort, and coming out in full force bombarded the Barādāri house where Aqibat had taken post. The thatched roofs projecting below that building were burnt down by artillery fire and the wall of the Barādāri was breached. Aqibat left it and went to his men on the river bank. Here the Badakhshis attacked a party of imperialists under the eunuch Basant Khan standing below the *jharoka* window, but fire was opened on them from the fort walls and they fled away. At last Aqibat admitted defeat, evacuated the city two hours before dawn, and retreated to Jaisinghpura, after sending a letter protesting his loyalty to the Emperor and pleading the excuse that the rising was due solely to the Badakhshi troops who were starving at not getting their pay. Then the Emperor ordered his men to cease fighting.

A host of men, including soldiers, sight-seers, and bazār people, were slain or had their houses burnt down and their property looted both in the Khās Bazār and also in the Khāri Bāoli quarter,—where another body of Badakhshis had looted, killed and burnt during the course of this night's street fighting, before they were defeated and driven out by the Lahor Gate. Next morning

Delhi looked like a city taken by storm and sacked.*

Even after his expulsion from Delhi, Aqibat did not cease to give trouble. In the environs of the capital he continued to plunder traders and extort money from well-to-do men wherever heard of,—at Ghāziud-din-nagar on 16th April, Sikandrabad on 27th and 28th April, and so on,—pretending all the time that he was helpless as his unpaid Turkish troops (Badakhshis) had taken the reins out of his hands. [*TAh.* 125*a*, 127*a*.] Thus, all things were steadily working up to an open clash between the Emperor and Imād, or the total dissolution of government; but it was a polar difference of State policy between them that actually precipitated the catastrophe.

§ 10. *Wazir's plan for rescuing the Emperor from Imad and the Marathas.*

The civil war had left Imād as indisputably the most powerful and renowned noble at the Court of Delhi. His large and seasoned personal contingent and his close and staunch alliance with the Marathas (who now stood aloof from the Emperor) would have made his power irresistible if the Jāt Rājah could be crushed and the fabulous wealth hoarded in his strongholds seized by the Bakhshi, because the Jats now remained as the only people

* *TAh.* 112*a*-124*a*. *D.C.* (differs in details.) *Muz.* 85-86.

capable of opposing Imād's overgrown strength. Nothing could then prevent him from deposing the house of Timur and taking the throne himself. Intizām, who was an intriguing politician, though no soldier, therefore contrived from the outset to save Safdar Jang from total annihilation, maintain the Jāt power intact, and rally these two and the Rājput Rajahs in a coalition under the Emperor's banners for expelling the Marathas from Hindustan and effectually guarding the imperial dominions from their encroachments in future. If Imād persisted in allying himself with these enemies of the State, he was to be crushed. The sword-arm of this new imperial defensive policy was to be the Hindu princes of Rajputana "whose lands were every year worse ravaged by the Marāthas than the imperial territory" [*Muz.* 88], and the Jats of Bharatpur, whose accumulated hoards had excited the envy and greed of the professional spoilers from the South. This bold plan of action was to be stiffened by the adhesion of Safdar Jang's long experience, eminent position in the peerage, and command of a body of veterans. For building up this coalition it was necessary for these late enemies to meet together, exchange personal assurances and oaths with the Emperor, and settle the terms quickly at a conference. Intizām, therefore, arranged that the Emperor should go

out of Delhi (where he was no better than a prisoner of the soldiery), to Sikandrabad on the plea of hunting and visiting the State gardens, and there meet Suraj Mal and Safdar Jang to whom secret letters of invitation had been sent, and then their combined forces would open the campaign. For this the imperial heavy artillery was to be taken out of Delhi, ostensibly for the Sovereign's escort, but really for giving the necessary support to his attempt to recover the Crownlands on that side from the hands of the rebels who had seized them.

In pursuance of this policy, the new wazir had persistently influenced the Emperor to evade Imād's demand for taking away all the provincial governments from Safdar Jang and turning him into a beggar, and also to save Suraj Mal from destruction by withholding the big guns so pressingly demanded by Imād for helping the Marathas to take Kumbher. He had also secured the Emperor's reluctant pardon for Safdar's two foremost Hindu officers Rajah Lachhmi Narāyan and Jugalkishor as early as 19th December 1753, and an order for the restoration of their escheated house and property on 17th May 1754. [*TAh.* 96*b*; *DC.*]

Such a policy of action required for its success courage and initiative on the part of the leaders. But the Emperor was constantly absorbed in drink or pleasure, his wazir was incompetent, and both

were extremely timid and fond of ease. The Queen-mother, too, with feminine obstinacy and pique now opposed the idea of coming to friendly terms with the ex-rebel Safdar Jang [*Siyar,* iii. 49.] The result was that Intizām's fine paper-scheme of a confederacy and restoration of imperial authority broke down when put in operation, and this one event of the march to Sikandrabad caused the instant and irretrievable ruin of Ahmad Shah and his wazir. Delhi historians have charged Intizām with treachery to his master for this failure; but there is no valid ground for this view. The character of these two chiefs made such a catastrophe as inevitable as the working of destiny.

§ 11. *The Emperor marches to Sikandrabad.*

But how was the insolvent sovereign to make this royal journey with all his family, household staff and artillery? The gunners refused to move unless their arrears were paid; the royal elephants had been kept fasting for four days at a time and grown too weak to carry loads; there was no draught bullock left in the artillery department; the imperial stores were denuded of their materials; no menial or porter could be secured and no cart hired except for cash, of which there was none in the Treasury. But somehow or other, the Emperor with his mother and wazir made a start from Delhi and went to Luni on 27th April; the

other princesses and the royal artillery arrived a few days later. Aqibat Mahmud then fell back from Ghaziabad (10m. s. e. of Luni) to Sikandrabad, plundering the wayfarers and the carts of food-stuff coming to Delhi. The wazir kept urging the Emperor to advance to Sikandrabad for recovering that tract of Crownlands from the usurpers. The Emperor at last consented, in spite of his lack of the money and material necessary for the journey and the projected compaign. Leaving Luni on 8th May, he reached a camp a few miles beyond Sikandrabad on the 17th. Meantime, Aqibat, after extorting Rs. 50,000 from the local traders in cloth and *ghee* by attaching their waggons of goods on the roads, had fallen back further south to Khurja, and the Emperor's administration was restored at Sikandrabad.

Here came the alarming news that Imād and the Marāthas having made peace with the Jāts had reached Mathurā, evidently intending to attack the Emperor or his capital with their overwhelming forces. Aqibat now sought an interview with Ahmad Shah through the wazir, who always "preferring peace to fighting," agreed. The Emperor felt himself utterly helpless and faced with ruin. On Friday the 24th of May, he prayed long in his tent and wept before God.

Aqibat came and interviewed him. The subtle Kashmiri wore a *darvish's* frock ("a long *gul-ārmāni* robe known in India as the badge of a man who has abandoned the world," *Muz.* 89), and whined that he was bent on retiring to a life of asceticism as his master Imād did not appreciate him. The Emperor was taken in and gave him a post in his own service! Then Aqibat took leave for Khurja, promising to bring that district under his new master's control.

Next day Aqibat wrote to inform the Emperor that Malhar Holkar was marching on Delhi with 50,000 horse, intending to release some prince from the State-prison of Salim-garh and crown him. At this news Ahmad Shah was unnerved and decided on returning to Delhi; but he took no precaution, nor posted patrols round his camp, as no Maratha had been reported within 50 miles of him. He only sent his advance-tents on the 25th towards Jhaunsi (10m. n. of Sikandrabad) on the way to Delhi, intending to march there the next day. [*TAh.* 125*b*-128*b*. *Muz.* 89-90. *Siyar*, 49.]

§ 12. *Malhar surprises imperial camp at Sikandrabad, 26 May 1754.*

But in the night between, spies brought the news that 20,000 Maratha light horse under

Malhar had arrived within 24 miles of the camp.* Ahmad Shah called his wazir for counsel, but the latter was sick of his worthless master and exasperated at the failure of his plan of campaign, and gave an angry reply. The Emperor controlled himself and immediately ordered the drums to beat a march, called for his portable chair (*takht-i-rawān*), and ordered that that night they would go to Shorajpur, 7 miles north of Sikandrabad. At this sudden order, for which none had been prepared before, his servants became utterly confused and disturbed. The camp stood at the crossing of two roads, and every one, in the absence of guidance or concerted plan of marching, went away some one way, some another.

The Emperor had arranged that Udham Bāi (his mother), Ināyetpuri Bāi (his favourite wife), Mahmud Shah *alias* Prince Bankā (his son), and Sāhiba Begam (his half-sister) should mount with him from the royal gate; the other princesses were ordered to enter their carriages at the Khawāspurā gate of the camp and to be conducted by the *nāzir* Roz-āfzun Khan. After the Emperor had started, his wife's sister, with his daughter

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* *TAh.* 128*b*-131*a*, most detailed and accurate, followed here. Shākir (77) present, but gives no detail. *Siyar* iii. 49. *Muz.* 90-92. *D.C.* *Bayān* 283-284 (incredible.) *S.P.D.* xxi 60 (Maratha side.)

Dilāfroz Banu (or Muhammadi Begam) and some other ladies and maids got into a bamboo-covered waggon at the royal gate and followed him. "During this confusion some arrived and some were left behind, none knew or cared who came and who did not. At the Khawāspurā gate a large party of royal ladies, including Malika-i-zamāni and Sāhib Màhal (two widows of Muhammad Shah), two daughters of Ahmad Shah, and Sarfarāz Mahal and Rāni Uttam Kumari (two of the Emperor's secondary wives) had mounted their covered waggons (*rath*) when the Marathas were sighted and an alarm was raised." It was two o'clock in the morning of the fourth day of the new moon, which had set long ago. The numerous munition carts and the waggons of the imperial stores and workshops and a vast crowd of followers blocked the road and caused indescribable confusion, which was heightened by the darkness of the night and the horror of the Maratha attack who had opened fire with their matchlocks. Every one fled wherever he could find an opening, forgetful of duty or friendship.

The numerous waggons ridden by the ladies of the harem could not maintain one unbroken line of caravan, but became dispersed, so that they could not be guided or protected. Roz-āfzun Khan (though a septagenarian and invalid)

guarded the princesses' carriages as far as he could. "But how could a hundred resist a thousand?" Malika-i-zamāni was captured by the Marathas and conveyed back to the imperial camp now in Maratha possession. The carts of Sāhib Mahal and some other ladies along with Roz-āfzun himself were overtaken by Aqibat's brother and conducted to the house of the *qāzi* of the city. Thus the night passed, none getting anything to eat.

After Ahmad Shah had reached Shorajpur with his few companions, spies brought the report that the Marathas were coming up in pursuit. He immediately mounted two fast-paced female elephants,—himself and his son on one with an open *haudā,* and his mother and wife on the second which carried a covered litter on its back,—and fled to Delhi with the utmost speed. About 2 o'clock in the afternoon of 26th May he sneaked into the palace of Delhi by the side of the octagonal tower; the few waggons following him entered by the southern gate. Only the royal jewellery had been brought away in safety, all other kinds of property, both of the State and of individuals, as well as all the artillery (said to be over 500 pieces of all calibres, *Bayān* 283), stores, treasure (some lakhs in gold and silver coins), tents &c. fell into the enemy's hands. But the greatest loss was

that of the honour of the imperial family; queens and princesses were held in captivity by the rude spoilers from the South. Such a calamity had never before fallen on the house of Timur and it lowered the head of every one in Delhi.

Three hours after the Emperor's arrival, the wazir, the Chief of Artillery (Samsām)* and some other officers reached Delhi and came to him. Ahmad Shah asked, "Why did you not bring with yourself the people of the harem and my 'honour' (*i.e.*, wives and daughters) who were there?" The wazir replied, "In the darkness of the night nothing could be learnt and nobody brought me news of their plight."

From the capital we turn to the captives who had not been so fortunate as to escape. Many of the *raths* of the women which had been scattered during the confusion of the night, were overtaken by the Marathas who tore off their screens and took away the money in their carriages and the ornaments on their persons; many women were outraged. Some escaped to different sides, and some came to Delhi on foot. Malika-i-zamāni and other captives were honourably treated by Malhar and placed under the care of the imperial

* According to *D.C.*, during the attack on the camp, Samsām had fought for an hour and thus enabled some Begams to reach the capital in safety.

officers of Sikandrabad, but guarded by Maratha soldiers. The change of linen of many of these ladies had been plundered, and as communication with Delhi was cut off for some days, the women of the harem, high and low, who remained captives in the camp suffered extreme hardship.

It shamed Imād even. On 28th May he came to Malhar's camp, went to Malika-i-zamāni, presented five *mohars* to her, laid his turban on the ground before her, and wept, professing shame and disgrace to himself at the hardships that had befallen her, and pleading in excuse, "I was helpless in the matter. The Deccanis would listen to none. I am like their servant. My face has been blackened." The ex-queen stoically laid the blame on Fate.

§ 13. *Imad-ul-mulk terrorises Emperor with Maratha help.*

On 30th May, the head clerk of the captive Rozāfzun Kh. brought to the Emperor a letter from Malhar making certain demands, which Rozafzun had strongly recommended as the only means of saving the capital from sack and the female captives from dishonour. Intizam gave bellicose counsel and said that he was ready to fight the Marathas, though his troops had mutinied and threatened to mob him only a few days before! The Emperor, therefore, asked for a day's respite before giving a reply to Malhar.

The next day (31st May) brought the news that a Maratha force had crossed the Jamunā and was plundering Jaisinghpurā and other suburbs south-west of the city. In fear that the capital would be sacked and the Emperor overthrown, Ahmad Shah wrote a *farmān* granting all the demands of Holkar. This first Maratha detachment withdrew in the afternoon, when another body forded the Jamunā near Khizirabad and plundered the *katra* of Nizamuddin Auliya's shrine and some other places and burnt the Khurma mart. Imād, on hearing of it, went to Malhar and asked, "What is this? Why are your men plundering the city?" The Maratha general replied, "These are soldiers. They always do so." Then Imād passionately cried out, "Either slay me, or withdraw your hand from such work," and drawing his dagger placed it before his ally. At this Malhar took horse, forded the Jamunā at the time of the sunset prayer, chastised the Maratha raiders and took them back across the river. The tumult ceased, but all who could fled from the environs into the walled city of New Delhi, so that "the suburbs became totally ruined and desolate like the homes of the head, from the hands of these unclean people."

The Emperor was stupefied and utterly helpless. On 1st June Aqibat Mahmud came to

him and got his consent to making Imād wazir, while Roz-āfzun Khan would be appointed superintendent of the Privy Council, thus relieving Intizām of both his high offices. In return, Aqibat swore on the Qurān that Imād and Malhar would never play him false nor trouble him and his kingdom in future. [*TAh.* 131*b*-134*b*.]

§ 14. *Fall of Emperor Ahmad Shah.*

The second of June, Imād-ul-mulk came to the Court with Tātyā Gangādhar (Holkar's *diwān*) Aqibat Mahmud, and his brother Saif-ullah, three hours after dawn.* Ahmad Shah first placed the Holy Book in the hand of Imād and called upon him to swear that he would not practise treachery against him. Imād did so, with the strongest oaths, and was next invested with the robe of the wazir. Then he went to the Chancellor's office, where its clerks were in attendance, signed a few papers as required by the rules, and retired to an ante-room behind it, dismissing the Mir Atish and all other officers present. Immediately after this he sent Aqibat Mahmud with the harem superintendent's assistant and a guard of 50 Badakhshi soldiers to the gate of the princes' quarter in the palace where all the grandsons of the Emperors lived in confinement.

* *TAh.* 135*a*-136*a*. *D.C.*

Aqibat sent his own eunuch inside and brought out Muhammad 'Aziz-ud-daulah, the son of Muizz-uddin, the son of Shah Alam Bahadur Shah I, and went back to his master with him. Imād came out of the wazir's office, made humble obeisance to the prince and followed him. By way of the triple-arch gate, they entered the *Diwān-i-ām*, where this prince was seated on the throne, the royal umbrella held over his head, and he was proclaimed Padishah Alamgir II.

The new Emperor immediately ordered his predecessor to be brought under arrest. Saifullah with his Badakhshis entered the harem by the Khās-mahal porch and discovered Ahmad and his mother hiding among the trees of the small garden in front of the Rang-mahal. The soldiers first seized the ex-Emperor and confined him in a room outside, and then throwing a *shāl* to cover his mother's face dragged her into the same prison. Mother and son were not parted in this their last adversity. The fallen monarch cried out for water in the agony of thirst and mental anguish. Saifullah held up to his lips some water put in the sherd of a broken earthen pot lying in the dust there, and the King of Kings of an hour ago was glad to drink from it. "What a revolution of fortune!" cries the annalist of his reign.

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